DISCOURSES

ON

DIFFERENT SUBJECTS;

BY THE

REV. RICHARD POLWHELE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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AND AN

ESSAY.

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THE vanity of human life is the principal ſubject of Eccleſiaſtes—a ſermon of moral admonition and exhortation, which the preacher delivers with peculiar force and ſolemnity, after having experienced all the follies, and ſorrows, and vexations that are to be met with under the ſun: for he had ſeen all things in the days of his vanity.

With a view to the paſſage before us (which is one of the moſt ſtriking in this famous diſcourſe) I propoſe to make ſome remarks on the comparative accommodation of man and other animals, in the preſent ſtate of exiſtence.

1. On examining the corporeal and mental faculties of man, in competition with the body and mind of the brutes, we ſhall find even his beſt and moſt ſucceſsful exertions leſs obviouſly adapted to the preſent ſtate, than thoſe of the animals apparently beneath him.

2. And, on obſerving his deviations from the ſphere of action aſſigned him by his Creator, we ſhall perceive in the ſtrongeſt light the ſuperior happineſs of the brute creation.

In regard to mere bodily powers, nature hath been evidently more propitious to the beaſts of the field or the fowls of the air, than to any of the human ſpecies.

There is no particular ſeaſon of the year, in which the human offspring is brought forth into the world. It is produced amidſt all the ſeverities of the ſeaſons; amidſt the chilling tempeſts of winter, or the ſuffocating blaſts of ſummer.

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The production of other animals is, moſtly, periodical; and ſo regulated by the laws of nature, that the young may enjoy a genial and cheriſhing heat, to ſtrengthen their weakneſs and aſſiſt their growth. If ſome animals come forth at the coldeſt and moſt inclement ſeaſon, they are peculiarly adapted to it by their natural warmth: and, if a few are produced at no ſtated periods, they are the hardier or domeſticated race.

Man is, indiſputably, the moſt helpleſs of all creatures, on his entrance into the world. He ſcarcely makes an effort towards ſelf-ſupport; while many of the brutes have the immediate command of their limbs. The fole and the fawn are, at once, vigorous and active; and the moſt imperfect animals have a decided advantage over the new-born infant. For, though they may be hardly half formed at their birth, they rapidly attain their proper ſhape. Indeed, the more imperfect they are, at firſt, the more quickly they arrive at maturity.

The years of childhood in man are many and tedious. Not an animal upon earth is ſo long in growing to its appointed ſize. The lamb, that friſks over the lawn as ſoon as it is yeaned, attains

in a very inconſiderable ſpace, the ſize and ſtrength allotted it by nature. And the bird, though callow and feeble as it burſts the ſhell, makes almoſt a viſible progreſs towards perfection, while its pinions are ſo ſoon fledg'd for the purpoſe of flight; and its plumage is ſhortly painted with all the variety of beautiful colors. With men, however, the periods of infancy and youth go far into threeſcore years and ten.

It is remarkable, alſo, that even viewing man in his ſavage ſtate, we ſee him without any natural covering, correſponding, as in other animals, with the climate where he lives. Yet nature ſeems very attentive to this object in her proviſion for the brutes; who are ſcantily cloathed where the warmth of the country ſuperſedes almoſt the neceſſity of cloathing, but are largely ſupplied with covering adapted to the colder climates. Beneath the Line, the hair of animals is, commonly, light and thin; but, in proportion as they approach the Poles, their hair grows thick and ſtrong, and cloſely-connected, and is ſometimes converted into a woolly ſubſtance. The general adaptation of animals to their reſpective climates, is more obſervable in the brutes than in man. The camel and

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the caſſowary are ſuited, in every point, to the deſart's burning ſands: and the rein-deer is as admirably formed for the waſte ever buried in ſnow. Neither the Arabian nor the Laplander could have exiſted in the countries which they reſpectively inhabit, but for the aid of the camel or the rein-deer, who were reduced into ſubjection by artificial means.

When arrived at full maturity, the bodily faculties of man ſeem imperfectly proportioned to their ends, in compariſon with thoſe of the animals around him. Though, indeed, on a different view of the ſubject, it may appear wiſely deſigned, that he ſhould poſſeſs neither the ſtrength of one animal, nor the ſwiftneſs of another, and that his organs of ſenſe ſhould be vaſtly inferior to thoſe of the brutes; yet theſe muſt ſeem very eſſential defects, attended with ſtriking inconveniencies, if we continue to ſurvey him, as an individual whoſe bodily powers are yet unaſſiſted by the action of the mind.

What are the natural means by which he is to procure himſelf ſubſiſtence? The moſt ſuperficial enquiry will ſhew us, that he is but ill provided for this end.

The curious naturaliſt muſt obſerve, how wonderfully the birds and beaſts are formed for the purpoſe

purpoſe of their procuring themſelves the various food adapted to their various inclinations. By remarking the peculiarities in the formation of different birds, we may determine, almoſt with certainty, the mode of ſubſiſtence to which their nature hath inclined them. Each ſpecies hath ſuch an organization of its parts, as to be enabled to procure its proper food, with the leaſt poſſible trouble.

Theſe diſtinctions may be noted in the ſwallow-tribe, who, living on beetles only to be found in air, are furniſhed with wings adapted for continual flights—in the birds, who, feeding on inſects, promiſcuouſly, are ſuited both to the air and the earth—in thoſe, who have long and ſlender bills for perforating the bottom of ſprings, and extracting the aquatic inſect—in the heron and the crane, who chiefly ſubſiſting on the fiſh of ſhallow waters are able to retain them, ſlippery as they are, by the peculiar indention of their bills—in the nocturnal bird, whoſe eyes are formed for collecting the ſmalleſt glimmering of light, and whoſe defects of viſion are compenſated by an extraordinary ſenſe of hearing—and in the eagle, and the vultur, whoſe piercing ſight, defended by a pro-

jection

jection of the ſkull from the dazzling ſunbeams, is fitted for the diſcovery of their prey, though high above the earth, and whoſe ſtrong and crooked talons are contrived to ſeize and bear it, irreſiſtibly, away.

This is but a ſlight ſketch of the characteriſtic marks that are analogous to their different purſuits. I might enumerate other diſtinctions in other ſpecies, that would impreſs us with aſtoniſhment at the wiſdom of the Creator, ſo minutely attentive to the preſervation and well-being of his creatures.

In beaſts we may perceive the ſame connexion of the parts with their manifold modes of ſubſiſtence.

The carnivorous is moſtly diſtinguiſhed from the graminovorous animal by the ſharpneſs of his teeth and claws, and the ſhortneſs of his neck. While the ox "that feedeth on graſs" is wiſely formed with a neck that reaches the ground, and with ſtrong ligaments ſupporting his head, to ſave him the pain of any muſcular exertion; the lion, that ravages the foreſt for ſuſtenance, confides, chiefly, in the ſtrength of his claws and his teeth. And here, perhaps, nothing is more deſerving our notice, than the wonderful formation of the elephant's

phant's trunk, by which ſhe eats and drinks, or ſucks herſelf, to feed her young, and does many things with ſurprizing agility, that ſhe would otherwiſe be too unwieldly to perform.

As the proviſion of the fiercer animals is much more precarious than that of the gentler, they can bear the want of food for a conſiderable time, without any great inconvenience. The power of abſtinence, indeed, in all the brute creation, is proportioned to their opportunities of procuring food.

I might inſtance a ſimilar conformity in the fiſhes of the ſea; from the great leviathan, that "takes its paſtime therein," to the minuteſt of the finny tribe—all originally impreſt with appetites for different kinds of aliment, and all as invariably adapted, in the ſtructure of their bodies, to theſe particular appetites. But, as the inhabitants of the waters are leſs obvious to vulgar notice, I ſhall forbear to diſcriminate their purſuits. It is enough to obſerve, that all the animals of the creation are thus admirably furniſhed for the eaſy acquiſition of their appropriate food. Even the mechaniſm of the reptile evinces the ſame wonderful contrivance; whether we remark the ſcales

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of the ſerpent, ſo conſtructed as to facilitate its gliding motion, or the ſpiral muſcle of the earth-worm, that enables it to penetrate the grave, and feed upon the mouldering corpſe.

In ſhort, the meaneſt animal that creepeth upon the ground, ſeems formed to gratify its proper appetites with all imaginable eaſe.

With regard to ſecurity from perſonal injury, or reſources in the midſt of danger, we have little to boaſt. A ſolitary individual of the human ſpecies, as yet unacquainted with artificial invention, is expoſed to a greater variety of aſſaults, and leſs able to eſcape or repel them, than any other animal which God hath created. In the perception of an enemy's approach, he is inferior to almoſt every creature. If attacked, he hath no means of defence: and, as to refuge, he hath neither the fleetneſs of the hart to betake himſelf to ſhelter, or the wings of the dove "to fly away, "and be at reſt." He hath neither the power of confronting or avoiding danger. The feathered race, tranſporting themſelves beyond the reach of man and beaſt, have chiefly to dread invaſion among themſelves. Againſt this they are variouſly provided. But there is one circumſtance as won-

derfully diſplaying the providence of God in guarding his creatures from danger, as any that can fall under the obſervation of the natural hiſtorian. 'Tis remarkable, that thoſe birds which are leſs on the wing than others, and generally employed on the ground, are ſo cloſely related in color to the places where they feed, as almoſt to blend with them into one indiſtinguiſhable maſs. And ſo conſcious are they of this affinity, which often deceives the moſt ſuſpicious eye, that they truſt to their concealment 'till the neareſt approach of the enemy. The ſame proviſion has been made for the beaſt as for the bird. The hare, perſecuted as ſhe is by almoſt every animal, yet owes her preſervation to her color, which, ſtrongly reſembling that of her ſeat, ſecures her often from diſcovery—perhaps more than to her nimbleneſs which bears her away from her purſuers. The retreats of other animals are ſecured in the ſame manner: and there are ſeveral creatures perfectly white, in the more northern latitudes; to reſemble the ſnows that cover their native mountains.

As to the relative ſituation of the brutes, 'tis obſervable, that all animals who have not the power of defence, are amply provided with the means

means of refuge. In proportion as the one fails, the other is invariably ſupplied. Though ſome are ordained to defend themſelves with the tuſk, the horn, the hoof, or the claw; yet as theſe natural weapons are not always adequate to their preſervation, they are generally ſo conſtructed as to have other ſubordinate reſources. They who depend only on flight for ſafety, have univerſally the advantage over their purſuers, in their perception of danger. The peculiar poſition both of the ear and the eye in theſe timid animals, who, perceiving ſounds at an amazing diſtance, amidſt their flight catch every noiſe from behind, and have alſo a perfect view of their purſuing enemy, was, doubtleſs, deſigned for their greater ſecurity. In the mean time, the deficiency of one ſenſe, is made up by a keener perception in another. Thus the mole, in whom a ſtrong ſenſe of ſeeing would anſwer no end, and who is therefore but ſlightly endowed with it, hath yet ſo quick and delicate an ear as to perceive even a whiſper in the neighbourhood of its dark excavation.

To theſe inſtances might be added many others, all tending to prove the ſame apparent partiality in nature to the animals beneath us, with reſpect

to the conformation of their bodies. But we need not multiply examples on ſo obvious a ſubject.

The diſeaſes to which our bodies are expoſed are, alſo, much more numerous than thoſe of the brutes.

It doth not appear, indeed, that the animals which are yet unſubdued by man, are liable to any conſtitutional diſorders. They live to the period appointed them by nature; expiring in conſequence of that neceſſary decay, which works by ſlow degrees on every created exiſtence, and finally brings it to diſſolution. With human beings, that decay is accelerated by numberleſs cauſes; many of which are not to be precluded in our preſent ſtate of manifold imperfection. Apart, however, from this conſideration, our lives are much ſooner terminated, in the regular courſe of nature, than the lives of various animals around us. The raven, the eagle, the ſtag, and the elephant, are permitted to extend their lives (but little interrupted by diſeaſe) beyond the age of man.

And, when the hour of death draws near, though the life of man was ſhort, and the life of the brutes comparatively long, "as the one dieth, ſo dieth the

" the other—yea, they have all one breath; ſo that " a man hath no pre-eminence above a beaſt."

In order to the poſſibility of man's exiſtence under all theſe inconveniences of nature, it was neceſſary that he ſhould have an immediate recourſe to the inventions of art. Though the ſimple ſuggeſtions of inſtinct might point out the vegetable productions around him, for his ſupport; yet he could not poſſibly exiſt in the open air, or without any other ſhelter than that of the trees which yielded him their fruit. To the gloomy receſſes of the cavern he would, probably, fly for ſafety. But, experiencing its inſufficiency, in its natural ſtate, to guard him from the elements, and labouring under apprehenſions of its inſecurity, he would endeavour to render it more tolerable by every obvious method; or build him, perhaps, a ſhapeleſs hut, after many an abortive attempt, and through long and laborious exertion.

Here, then, we may perceive the firſt dawning of the mind, to which ſo rude an habitation can never afford even a momentary ſatisfaction. The animals that " make their houſes in the rocks," may be ſatisfied with their retreat, becauſe it is ſuitable

ſuitable to their nature, and they have no wants or wiſhes beyond it.

But the caſe is far otherwiſe with man. He hath intellectual faculties that require to be exerciſed, in order to his preſervation; and, in proportion as they are called forth, render him diſſatisfied with the bare neceſſities of life. And he hath a variety of affections, whoſe office it is to awaken theſe intellectual powers, that might otherwiſe lie dormant to his own deſtruction, and to ſtimulate them into everlaſting activity.

We cannot contemplate man, in ſolitude. He may intrench himſelf, poſſibly, behind his own works, ſo as to defy the fury of ſavage beaſts. Urged by the calls of hunger, he may traverſe the foreſt to procure his food with artificial weapons. But ſuch a ſtate of miſerable exiſtence cannot long endure.

The individual beaſt hath ever, ſuperadded to his natural powers in reſpect to danger, ſome degree of ſagacity and cunning, by which he guards againſt what may probably happen—by which he ſtrengthens himſelf in confronting, or evades what actually threatens him. The brute is perfectly well acquainted with his natural enemies.

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The retreats of the fox and the rabbit are not eaſily acceſſible: and the remarkable cunning which the former diſcovers on various occaſions, is too well known to be more than tranſiently noticed. The wild goats, "for whom the high "hills are a refuge"—"the wild goats of the rock" defend themſelves againſt their aſſailants in a ſurprizing manner, by ſeizing the narrow paſſes; the poſſeſſion of which they often maintain with an unconquerable obſtinacy. The poor fugitive hare frequently eludes the threatened danger, by numerous ſubterfuges that impoſe on her purſuers. The elephant examines the ground, ſtep by ſtep, with his trunk, when, on a ſuſpected ſpot, he hath reaſon to apprehend ſome latent ſnare.

If an animal be diſordered, he knows the remedy for his diſeaſe, and inſtantly hath recourſe to it. For nature hath not only provided medicinal herbs for the uſe of different animals (and ſo wonderfully too, that in every country ſubject to certain diſorders, certain plants for remedying theſe diſorders are always found) but ſhe hath endued them with a power of diſtinguiſhing theſe medicinal plants, as far as ſuch diſcernment is neceſſary to health.

But,

But, in a ſtate of ſolitude, how wretchedly ſituated is a diſeaſed man, who, though he may accidentally diſcover the qualities of a few plants (perhaps by the fortuitous direction of brutes), muſt be utterly at a loſs as to the remedy of his particular diſorder.

To a combination of various talents and diſpoſitions we owe the invention and ſupport even of the neceſſary arts and ſciences, without looking to the conveniencies and comforts of improved ſociety. The firſt ſocial union muſt be neceſſarily occaſioned by the inclination of the ſexes. And in this primary connexion is laid the foundation of all the moral duties that influence the human conduct. The conjugal love introduces the expectation and the care of offspring. To make the beſt proviſion, therefore, for children, muſt be the firſt object of thoſe who are thus cloſely united. It is this which may ſuggeſt to them the means of moderating the ſummer's heat, and of creating artificial warmth amidſt the rigors of the winter—may urge them to improve, more expeditiouſly, what they have been gradually altering for their better accommodation, and to ſeek other aſſiſtance,

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in order to their daily ſuſtenance, than the precarious acquiſitions of the chace.

The brute creation pair together, from the ſame principles that influence the human ſpecies. The connexion is inſtantly formed at the appointed ſeaſon, without any premeditation, and by a kind of overruling neceſſity.

The birds, thus irreſiſtibly coupled, are quickly employed in collecting materials for the fabrication of their neſts. And the beaſts are, in due time, equally aſſiduous in preparing fit places for the reception of their young.

The beautiful, though ſimple neſt may deſerve our particular notice, as the work of pure inſtinct, unguided by experience, imitation, or inſtruction. In a few days the little artiſts bring it to its perfect form: and ſo finiſhed is it on every view, ſo well adapted to the eggs which are there to be depoſited —the nature of the young they are to produce— and the convenience and ſecurity of the foſtering parent, as to its capaciouſneſs, warmth, and peculiarity of conſtruction, that no human artiſt could point out a ſingle blemiſh, or deviſe the moſt trivial improvement. Nor ought we to paſs over the circumſtance of its ſituation, which diſcovers

as much judgment as the contrivance of it. The neſts that are placed in elevated ſituations, ſo as to be out of the reach of enemies, are commonly open to obſervation. But thoſe which are low-built, are invariably concealed from view.

Perhaps the moſt remarkable inſtance of this kind of precaution, may be noted in that curious bird, which ſews its neſt to the outermoſt branches of trees, to preſerve it from the monkey-race.

Thus "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the "air have neſts;" but man hath not where to lay his head, 'till after infinite anxiety and labor.

But brute animals have not the advantage only of being ſo readily provided with habitations. In ſome reſpects, the habitations of brutes are preferable to thoſe of civilized man.

We have admired the finiſhed beauty of the neſt. In the ſame manner, we ſhall find, on examination, that the productions of human art can never be ſo complete in themſelves, as the other works of natural inſtinct; though, indeed, they may be much more dazzling and magnificent.

The beaver performs by inſtinct, what one ſhould imagine to have been the effect of reaſoning, founded on philoſophical experiment. Without

inveſtigating

inveſtigating the works of beavers in this place, I ſhall only hint at a ſingle inſtance of their ſagacity. In conſtructing their dams, or cauſeways, they invariably make a ſlope on the ſide againſt which the water preſſes—a precaution for eluding the force of that element, which is not always taken even by human artiſts; tho' human artiſts would, doubtleſs, have ſooner arrived at what they call perfection, had they obſerved the operations of animals, and collected from them the principles of art.

The waxen cell of the bee muſt afford, alſo, matter of wonder to the contemplative mind, and lead us, almoſt, to conclude with the philoſopher, that the ſoul of the brutes is God himſelf. On marking the curious geometrical conſtruction of the cell, we ſhould perceive, that the hexagonal ſhape is the only one, which could ſo perfectly have anſwered the purpoſes of containing honey, and being the receptacle of the young bees.

We may collect, that whatever is done by man towards the improvement of his lot, is the conſequence of ſlow and wavering determination. Originally, indeed, he might have found little room for debate; becauſe he might have been

preſented with few contending objects, to occaſion the vibrations of reaſon and paſſion.

But, amidſt the complications of ſociety (which I have not yet ſuppoſed) we might obſerve the equipoiſe of doubtful ſentiment, inſpired by different objects, at firſt equally attractive; the gradual tendency to one in disfavor of another; and the increaſing inclination that leads to a final deciſion.

The operation of inſtinct, however, in irrational animals, is, every where, quick and deciſive, becauſe it proceeds without the ſlighteſt interruption from the reaſon; which, in man, (as I have ſaid) is occupied by the compariſon of ſuch objects as ſolicit the choice, and a deliberation on the different qualities that ſhould determine a preference.

Human execution, alſo, is tardy, defective, and unſatisfactory; whilſt that of the brute animal is, at once, complete and conſentaneous to its wiſhes. The abilities of the brutes are always equivalent to their deſires.

In the education of their children, we may obſerve the human parents not ſufficiently attentive to the ſimple voice of inſtinct, which was certainly ordained for the guidance of man as well as the brutes;

brutes; though with the former it is a much feebler principle, requiring the aſſiſtance of our judgment and affections. With all their attention, however, to the genuine dictates of nature, parents are often at a loſs how to proceed, in the treatment of their offspring. Reaſon appears to be ſo uncertain and fallacious a guide, that even intelligent parents diſagree with others equally wiſe, in the courſe of education they purſue. To be overanxious about the health or welfare of their progeny, is, frequently, the misfortune among men. Hence the fondeſt hopes of affection are, often, fruſtrated by its own unhappy intervention. Yet, where no improper ſolicitudes exiſt, the parental love in man is neceſſarily attended with various anxieties. The alarms of fear, for inſtance, are not with us a mere interruption of the moment. They are carried into futurity by the power of an imagination, which the vigilance of reaſon would vainly attempt to reſtrain.

The different conduct, diſpoſition, manner, or even the form and expreſſion of the features, in children, inſpire the moſt judicious parent with ſtrong and irreſiſtible partialities. The predilection for one child muſt operate, unleſs very nicely guarded, to the neglect of another. Whether

ther any general improprieties of conduct may flow from it or not, this ſpecies of partiality is always ſecretly felt by every human parent; and ſo imperceptibly gains upon the heart, that it is often expreſt in action before reaſon is able to interpoſe.

Amidſt theſe difficulties and diſtreſſes, the neceſſity of a long and continued attention to the education of his offspring, is more peculiarly impoſed upon man. Their helpleſſneſs and want of early diſcernment hath already called for more than ordinary care: and their years of tedious immaturity, have an equal claim to the extent of it. During this period, the ſlow progreſs and frequent inattention of the child to the direction of his parents, require all their vigilance, and exerciſe all their patience.

But this connexion is ſtill carried beyond the limits of neceſſity. The paſſion of eſteem in the parent, and of gratitude in the child, ſuperinduced on the natural ſtorgé, occaſion the coextenſion of their reciprocal offices with the term of their earthly exiſtence. Theſe ſupervenient affections create thoſe mutual acts of kindneſs which contribute to the happineſs of man, in his preſent ſtate of dependence on the inclinations and conduct

duct of others. But when the natural ſtorgé, no longer neceſſary, begins to loſe itſelf in eſteem or gratitude, or aſſumes a different form under the influence of theſe cooler affections; the reciprocal duties that ſubſiſted between the parent and the child begin, alſo, to relax their obligation. The inſtinctive paſſion, however, is ſo gradually blended with other affections, that we cannot exactly determine the criſis of its diſappearance. Yet the parents are ſtill to keep in view the intereſts of their offspring, when this period is paſt, and, conſequently, when the buſineſs of education is perfected; though they have no longer the right of controuling their children's inclinations, or of exerciſing any coercive authority. In the ſame manner, are children bound by gratitude to cheriſh and aſſiſt their parents, though they are liberated from all the reſtraints of filial obedience.

The conduct of the brutes, in the mean time, with reſpect to theſe connexions, is ſuch as human reaſon muſt contemplate with admiration.

While inſtinct ſuggeſts to them the ready means of conſulting the well-being of their young, it impels them to the inſtant execution of her unerring dictates. Not a moment elapſes in the pauſe of

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heſitation. For with them intention is hardly ſeparable from action. They poſſeſs a nice diſcriminative ſenſe, by which they diſtinguiſh their own proper food, and the food which is proper for their offspring. The quadruped is ſupplied, indeed, with a ready nutriment, to which its young are immediately directed. But the bird, exploring the fields and woods for the proviſion of her neſtlings, and always ſucceſsful in her ſearch, returns to them, often, from diſtant places with a wonderful celerity. Miſled by no improper anxiouſneſs, ſhe feeds her young with tenderneſs and impartiality. Though, on her approach, all the neſtlings gape for food; yet, as ſhe brings only a ſingle morſel at a time, we might ſuppoſe her diſtracted by their craving importunities, and furniſhing one with a double ſhare, to the neglect of another. Yet ſo exact is her recollection, or rather ſo undeviating her inſtinct, that ſhe feeds them all, equally, in order, without the ſlighteſt miſtake or heſitation.

The quick inſtinct and early maturity of young animals, renders it unneceſſary for the parent to retain them long under her protection. And 'tis remarkable with what rapid intelligence the young underſtand the language of their dam; and how

inſtantaneouſly

inſtantaneouſly they obey every call, whether it be the voice of affection, or the warning of danger.

By a particular ſound, which they inſtantly comprehend, the hen "gathereth her chicken under her "wings." And by another ſound, ſhe warns them of impending danger; to avoid which they inſtantly fly to her protection, or crouch down under the graſs, to conceal themſelves from the enemy. And ſo aſſiduous is the guardian parent, that ſhe often expoſes herſelf to danger, for the ſake of her young. The hind throws herſelf in the way of the hounds, to lead them from her fawn. The partridge flutters and lingers amidſt her purſuers, to draw off attention from her young, and give them time to eſcape. As the young, inſtinctively, know their natural enemies, theſe efforts of the parent are generally ſucceſsful. "When the eagle "ſtirreth up her neſt, fluttereth over her young, "ſpreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them and "beareth them on her wings"—all her labors are invariably rewarded, by the promptneſs and docility of her offspring.

The young, immediately as they are born, diſcover a propenſity to thoſe actions that are peculiar to their own ſpecies. What is proper for their

ſtate of maturity, they immediately attempt, before they have powers any way adequate to the performance of it. So that, led by a ſecret and infallible guide to the exerciſe of their proper abilities, they want but ſlight aſſiſtance from the ſuperior ſagacity of the parent. Their connexion, therefore, as it ſubſiſts no longer than it is neceſſary, is ſoon diſſolved. The diſſolution is not gradual, but inſtantaneous.

And, where no parental care is wanted, none is exerciſed; though the caſe of the oſtrich, who depoſits her eggs in the ſand, leaves them to the warmth of the ſun to ſupply the place of incubation, and returns to them no more, may be a ſingular caſe in nature.

If, on the other hand, there be any exception, where this connexion is ſo protracted, that the ſemblance of the relative duties exiſt between irrational animals and their offspring, we may obſerve this connexion in the ſtork and his aged parent; though the hiſtories of his filial love ſeem the reſult of imperfect obſervation.

We may remark, at this interval of compariſon, that our faculties and affections are often erroneous

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in their ſuggeſtions and operations, whilſt thoſe of the bird and beaſt are never ſubject to deviation or miſtake; that the exerciſe of them is required for a very conſiderable time, in order to the preſervation of our offspring; and that, in ſupport even of our firſt ſocial connexion, the exerciſe of them is required through life. Theſe exertions (if they may be called ſuch) have frequent intermiſſions in the brutes. There are ſome animals (ſuch as the eagle) who, having paired together, never ſeparate. The brute creation, however, in general, are quickly diſmiſſed from all the offices of conjugal and parental attention; and, 'till they are impelled to raiſe a new progeny, have nothing to regard but their own immediate preſervation.

But man doth not reſt here. The ſocial principle excited by various wants, to the ſupply of which one family is inadequate, ſuggeſts to him the neceſſity of a union of families, and a combination of intereſts.

Hence the unbroken, undivided common hath its ſeveral maſters aſſigned it by mutual compact: and boundaries are marked out, to diſtinguiſh the reſpective property of every individual.

Thus the agricultural life commences; whilſt the acquiſitions of the chace are abandoned for the more grateful product of the ground.

In proceſs of time, the arts begin to multiply: and each man purſues a different art, according to his genius or inclination. Even in the earlier ſtages of ſociety, a great multiplicity of arts, all tending to one common point, muſt neceſſarily concur to ſupply the wants of life. The failure of one may prevent the operation of another; occaſion manifold eccentricities, diſorder the whole ſyſtem, and deſtroy the fabric of ſociety. Yet the regular motion of theſe depends on the harmony of human inclination; than which nothing is more variable and uncertain.

In this diverſity of purſuit and this fluctuation of temper, originated the diſtinctions of ſtation and the exerciſe of power; ſince all could not poſſibly remain upon an equality, whilſt engaged by employments ſo very different in their nature—ſome more or leſs laborious, or lucrative, or fortunate than others; and ſince to overlook theſe different purſuits exiſting with ſuch uncertainty, direct their proper bias, and lead them, as in concert, to one common centre, it was neceſſary that there ſhould

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be ſome controul adapted to occaſions or contingencies.

Here, then, we diſtinguiſh the rich and the poor, the governor and the governed.

And, not to enter more deeply into the varieties of human life—not to examine the populous city, replete with all the innumerable inventions that flow from the commercial intercourſe of nations, we may here obſerve a ſufficient room for the exertion of ingenuity, and patience—for all the ſocial duties. Attentive to their own particular calling, whether the labor of the body or the mind; the rich are to exerciſe their benevolence, the poor their gratitude, the governor his juſtice, the governed their obedience.

Thus ſituated, mankind had gained a ſufficient maſtery over the beaſts of the field. They had now no dangers to dread, ſecure in their combined force, and in the uſe of various weapons, that were fabricated to repel the fierceſt attacks. It was fortunate, however, for the human race, that the more ſavage animals were naturally averſe from their habitations.

Had the lion, the tyger, or the contour of the mountains been inclined to invade villages and towns,

towns, the inhabitants would have been conſtantly employed in guarding againſt attacks that threatened extirpation. The continual vigilance, which would have been neceſſary to the ſafety of their bodies, would have precluded all attention to their minds.

The dangers men had to fear, in ſociety, were far different. But on theſe I ſhall not, at preſent, deſcant; ſince I am conſidering ſociety in its beſt poſſible ſtate.

Nevertheleſs, the natural evil of diſeaſe increaſing often in conſequence of their neceſſary purſuits, they were unable to baniſh from their walks by all the efforts of genius and toil. Theſe efforts were only found equal to the invention of a few remedies for a few diſorders; whilſt other maladies, even in the moſt improved ſociety, were ſtill permitted to rage with unabated violence. Though all the herbs of nature were ranſacked, their qualities were but imperfectly diſcovered. Though the qualities of many were aſcertained, the application of them to particular diſorders was ſtill hazardous; and to be fixed only by repeated trials, that oftener failed than ſucceeded. Though the entrails of the earth were torn up, in

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ſearch of metallic ſubſtances; though theſe ſubſtances underwent a vaſt diverſity of changes in the laboratories of the chemiſt; though their parts were decompounded, their nature elucidated amidſt the chemical proceſs, and their virtues, as medicinals, ſuſpected; yet here, alſo, all was darkneſs, 'till many fell, the victims of experiment. Nor are the medicines in uſe, univerſally efficacious, or directed alike, in their operation, by different people, after all theſe painful reſearches and the accumulated experience of ages. And, as they are not in the hands of every individual, a great number are to depend, for health and life, on the talents and honeſty of a few.

In the mean time, the combinations of brute animals are influenced very differently from thoſe of man.

We have viewed the employments and the duties of the human race progreſſively increaſing, from the firſt ſimple connexion to the complications of ſociety.

But the pairs of birds or beaſts that met together, to propagate and rear their offspring, inſtead of remaining in each other's communion, and ſtrengthening their ſociety by new acceſſions, diſperſe

perſe (as we have ſeen) when the ends which connected them are anſwered; and recollect or recogniſe one another no more.

The animals that are gregarious, or that live in a ſort of political community, by no means coaleſce in conſequence of conſanguinity or choice.

The beavers, whoſe mode of living ſeems the moſt ſtriking picture of human ſociety, are connected by the ſame inſtinct that dictates and overrules the purſuits of all animals inferior to man. They fix, as it were by common conſent, on the ſpot moſt convenient for their habitation and ſubſiſtence. They collect their materials and execute their work, without the ſlighteſt interruption from idleneſs or negligence. When their works are completed, they unite in furniſhing their houſes with proviſions, which are always ſufficient for their ſupport during the winter, and are divided into equal ſhares, and diſtributed with regularity and harmony.

But, as they act from an invincible neceſſity, they never deviate into any diverſities of occupation: they diſcover no differences of inclination, ſo as to break the uniformity of their purſuits, or lead them off from their proper line of conduct.

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The ſame, alſo, is obſervable in thoſe little feathered artiſts, whoſe ways we have already contemplated with delight. Every ſpecies of birds is diſtinguiſhed by its different employments. But to this original diſtinction each ſpecies ſeverally adheres, as with one mind, and without the moſt trivial variation. All the neſts of one ſpecies are uniform, as to ſtructure, ſituation, and materials; yet different, in every circumſtance, from the neſts of another. And no individual hath any propenſity to wander from the duties (if I ſo ſay) of his particular ſpecies.

This being the caſe, we ſee no difference of ſtation in bird or beaſt, as in man; nor any ſenſe of ſuperiority, or ſubordination. Their original conſtitution, and the neceſſity that ſubjects them to the laws of it, preclude any diſcriminations in the ſociety of brute creatures, as well as the reſtraint of particular decrees, which can only be ſuited to particular emergencies.

The commonwealth of bees can afford no exception to this obſervation. For, though they ſeem to be under the abſolute command of their queen, and to execute whatever ſhe deſigns, with the ſtricteſt punctuality; yet we never obſerve in

her, who is the mainſpring of motion, any particular deſignation of power, ſo as to be able to enact new laws adapted to particular circumſtances; or the leaſt propenſity to ſtray (through a peculiar bias of opinion) from thoſe general purſuits that are agreeable to the nature of bees. The bees no more depend on the will of another, though they follow the motions of their queen, than the ſpider (who ſpins out of his own bowels the filaments which compoſe his reſting place—tranſport him through the air, and ſecure to him his ſubſiſtence) depends on extraneous volition or inclination; ſince the queen-bee is governed by immediate laws that ſhe cannot reverſe, and hath not herſelf the power of volition.

In the ſocieties of the emmet, the ſame apparent ſubordination hath been obſerved as in thoſe of the bee. It may alſo be accounted for on the ſame principles.

The moſt ſpecious appearance of laws adapted to particular occaſions, among birds or beaſts, may be ſeen in the ſocieties of the rook and the heron, who, if they find a thief pilfering ſticks from his neighbours, join together to deſtroy the pilferer's neſt; or, in the ſocieties of the monkey-

race,

race, who put their ſentinel to death, if they ſuffer through his remiſſneſs or incaution.

We have ſeen, that each individual beaſt hath the power in himſelf of guarding againſt danger, as well as of procuring his proper food. But the aggregation of ſocial animals muſt greatly contribute to their mutual ſecurity.

There are birds who build their neſts, in ſociety, and aſſociate at the time of their feeding: the latter, evidently, for their mutual ſafety. For at this time they never fail to appoint a ſentinel, who is placed in ſuch a ſituation as to have the command of a pretty conſiderable proſpect; and whoſe buſineſs it is to give the alarm on the approach of an enemy. In this manner every individual of the flock hath his turn of ſerving the community.

In the ſame manner the gregarious quadruped appoints his ſentinel. This is the caſe with ſheep, in a ſtate of nature.

With all his ſagacity and all his foreſight, 'tis much eaſier to ſurprize man, than his inferiors the brutes.

As to their defending themſelves from an actual attack, it is well known, that ſheep have been

enabled, by aſſociation, to withſtand the rage of the fierceſt invaders.

In his preſent ſubjection to man, the ſheep appears the moſt defenceleſs of the brute creation. But by drawing up in battle array, which they always do on an alarm, and ſheltering themſelves behind the rams of the flock, the fleecy tribe might defend themſelves againſt their moſt formidable enemies, as long as the males were proportioned in number to the females: and this, in their wild ſtate, muſt have been neceſſarily the caſe.

'Tis remarkable, that rooks join to attack a kite; and elephants attack in a body, or, if repulſed, retire in a body.

That the brute creatures combine to aſſiſt one-another, when diſeaſed, we do not obſerve. But (as we have already ſeen) 'tis commonly in the power of every individual beaſt, to remedy the diſorders to which he is naturally ſubject.

It is ſaid, indeed, that if an elephant be wounded, he meets with the moſt friendly aſſiſtance from his brother animals; who endeavour to reſcue him from the hunter, ſupply him with neceſſary food, and take all proper care of him 'till his wounds

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are healed. If he die, they cover his carcaſe with branches of trees and graſs.

From this further comparative view we may collect, that, in ſociety alſo, the beaſts have the advantage over man.

We have obſerved, that, whilſt men are various and uncertain in their works and in their reciprocal offices, the beaſts are uniform and unchangeable—that, whilſt men are differently claſſed, according to their degrees of wealth or power, the beaſts are free from ſuch diſtinctions—that whilſt men are to depend on one another for precarious aſſiſtance, amidſt danger or diſeaſe, the beaſts are, in this reſpect, independent, or not ſubjected to capricious inclination.

It ſhould ſeem, then, from this whole compariſon, that theſe great inadequacies of our bodies were purpoſely intended by Providence for the exerciſe of our minds.

A ſolitary man could hardly exiſt. He was impelled by neceſſity to ſeek the company of his fellows. But, without various orders, no ſociety could be maintained. And theſe various orders, impoſing a multiplicity of duties upon man, required

quired his never-ceaſing vigilance—required the unremitted exertion of every faculty, every affection of his nature.

Yet, after all his progreſſive toil, heſitation, and doubt—after all his unavoidable errors and inadvertencies—amidſt all his apprehenſions, as dependent on the will of others—amidſt all the claſhing of opinions and of intereſts, and amidſt natural evils which he cannot ſhun; can we ſay, that, in point of convenient accommodation, he is arrived to an equality with the brutes, who have every thing they want or deſire, ſupplied inſtantly at their birth—whoſe inſtinct is quick, unwavering, unerring—whoſe joint operations are uniform and decided—who are independent on one another, and little expoſed to natural evil?

To what end are "all theſe things ſo full of "labor, whilſt the eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, "or the ear with hearing?"—To what end are theſe manifold exertions, when we might have been better accommodated, like the beaſts, without them? Is not this a waſte of labor? Is ſo inadequate a proviſion for our frail bodies worth ſo much pains, in ſo tranſient a ſtate of exiſtence?

But,

But, if we detach our faculties and affections from the body, which bears us down to the duſt—if we raiſe the mental powers above temporal concerns to philoſophical images; and conſider the paſſions, as intereſted by proſpects beyond the grave—if we contemplate the mind, as conſcious of a ſuperintending Deity and influenced by the ideas of his attributes, we ſhall have ſtill a juſter cauſe to deem ourſelves created for no end—ſhould this earth appear, after all, to be our final habitation.

Our faculties are capable of being improved to a very high degree, much beyond what the care of our bodies or the calls of ſociety require: and, indeed, when they have been illuminated with ſome portion of knowledge, they never repoſe in their acquiſition; but, inſtead of indolent acquieſcence, continually aſpire after a larger ſhare, and thus proceed, increaſing the ardor of their aſpirations, in proportion as they are more and more enlightened.

That this is the very nature of the human mind, muſt be evident to every one who reflects for a moment on its vaſt capacity, and the variety and rapidity of its operations. The multiformity of the

the materials which are depoſited in the memory—our power of ſtill adding to the ſtore, at every period of life—our retaining them, unimpaired, through a ſeries of years, and our ability to call forth, for uſe, what part of them we pleaſe, whether long laid up or recently depoſited—all this we muſt have frequent opportunities of obſerving, amidſt the ordinary tranſactions of life. But they, who are employed in ſcientific reſearches, have often ſuch a faculty of retention and recollection, as even the philoſophical obſerver himſelf can hardly contemplate without admiration.

From this ſtorehouſe of memory, the judgment ſelects ſuch ideas as anſwer its purpoſes, compares them with one another, arranges them in the exacteſt order, and forms them, by a wonderful proceſs, into infinite varieties of compoſition.

The ſphere of imagination is ſtill more extenſive: no boundaries, indeed, can be affixed to this faculty, that moulds the materials of memory into unſeen ſhapes, and raiſes up, at will, a new creation.

Hence the moſt beautiful productions in polite literature: hence all thoſe refined enjoyments, which are peculiar to the human ſpecies: and hence

hence thoſe painful emotions—that mental anguiſh, ſo exquiſitely keen; to which all the ſevereſt bodily ſenſations are torpid inſenſibility.

The mind of man, which through fancy combined with the affections, gives the acuteſt edge to bodily pain, can, however, by the ſame aſſiſtance, detach itſelf from its earthly vehicle—can abſtract its eſſence, as it were, out of the body, though writhing and convulſed, ſo as to be almoſt unconſcious of any corporeal diſorder, in the midſt of the moſt terrifying inflictions.

When we conſider, too, the perpetual progreſſion of all our faculties towards perfection—their reſtleſſneſs whilſt interrupted amidſt the purſuit, and yet their vaſt, their inconceivable diſtance from the point to which they tend—even as contemplated in the moſt comprehenſive minds that ſo rapidly acquire what common minds could not have attained through the whole extent of life, and that ſtill accumulate knowledge with indefatigable pains, and, after all, feel a vacuity for ever remaining to be filled up, are ſenſible of manifold deficiencies, are ignorant of a great multiplicity of things which they deſire to know, but which are hid in impenetrable miſts—when we meditate

on theſe capabilities of the human ſoul thus formed, one ſhould imagine, for everlaſting attainments, and its never-ſated thirſt after knowledge that would occaſion its progreſs through all ages, were all ages within its graſp—can we poſſibly reconcile ourſelves to the ſtroke of death, if the ſtroke of death inſtantaneouſly annihilate the ſoul? Are we not, alas! poor abortive intelligencies, if in this life only we have hope? Would it not drive us to deſperation, to be aſſured that, ſtored with an amazing quantity of knowledge, divine and human, and deep in the myſteries of ſcience, and refined with all the elegance of art, our faculties ſhould periſh, for ever—irrecoverably quenched in utter darkneſs? To what purpoſe, if theſe things are ſo, is our improvement of the talents we poſſeſs, and which we hope were beſtowed on us for our ultimate happineſs; ſince, often, "in much "wiſdom is much grief; and he that increaſeth "knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow."

The brute creation, in the mean time, have gained all they can, after a very little proportion of their lives is paſt. Were they to live ten thouſand years, they could never overſtep thoſe bounds of knowledge, at which we ſee them reſt,

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in happy acquieſcence. Under the tuition of man, the more intelligent and tractable may be taught a variety of practices, that appear to flow from reaſon. There are ſome, who may be ſucceſsfully inſtructed in the arts of ſpeech, which ſeemed to be a gift beſtowed excluſively on man. But though they articulate words with even human diſtinctneſs, yet all is mechanical and involuntary. It hath no connexion with mind. The moſt ſenſible of theſe creatures had never the faculty of ſpeaking according to his recollection. Though he ſeems to remember various circumſtances, he hath not the ſlighteſt power of compoſing, or combining ideas as preſented to him by memory. The horſe may recollect places which he hath long ago frequented, more eaſily and readily than man; diſcovering, we muſt own, a ſurpriſing ability to retain the traces of an old impreſſion. But 'tis no more than a ſimple recollection; in conſequence of which he cannot connect ideas or draw concluſions.

The ſagacity diſplayed by one of our domeſticated animals, affords us frequent occaſions of aſtoniſhment. But we ſoon perceive the extent of his capacity—we can quickly aſcertain the very point of perfection to which he can ever arrive.

Man, in a ſtate of barbarity, invariably ſhews the ſuperiority of his intellectual powers over thoſe of the moſt ſagacious brutes, by the quickneſs of his apprehenſion, the acuteneſs and ſtrength of his reaſoning, or the vigor of his fancy. The wildeſt ſavage hath always a tendency to civilization or improvement. The moſt ignorant may be inſtructed in the arts of ratiocination, though his mind can be opened but by ſlow degrees; and the moſt ſtupid hath ſome ſenſe of ſhame, which may be gradually wrought up into a ſtrong and lively conſciouſneſs.

The extinction of that underſtanding which the brutes poſſeſs, can be no reaſonable ſubject of regret; becauſe it is only ſo much as may contribute to the ends of bodily preſervation and well-being. Subſervient to the body, the mind may juſtly periſh, when the body requires its ſervice no more. They may very wiſely be diſſolved together, at the ſame moment; as the one hath no intereſt beyond the other.

With man, however, the mind is the beſt—the moſt valuable part; to which the body ſhould be in conſtant ſubjection. The decay and diſſolution of the latter, indeed, are often occaſioned or accelerated

accelerated by thoſe very ſtudies—thoſe elevated purſuits which are the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of our nature; and the happy progreſs of which is the chief circumſtance that conſtitutes our ſuperiority over the brute creation. That the human ſoul, therefore, ſhould be diſſolved with the body; that it ſhould have no proſpect beyond its preſent imperfect exiſtence, would be a ſad and mortifying reflexion.

Our beſt paſſions, alſo, are vainly interwoven in our conſtitution, if, after they have been fixed on objects worthy all their ardors, they are to have thoſe objects ſnatched from them for ever, and to ſuffer diſappointment that ſhall never be repaired. After we have formed the moſt virtuous friendſhips, endeared to us by a thouſand acts of kindneſs and promiſing the moſt rational comforts, ſhall theſe connexions be ſuddenly deſtroyed, to the everlaſting fruſtration of our hopes? 'Tis with a view to their durability (notwithſtanding the precarioufneſs of our lives) that we form theſe laudable connexions.

There is not a ſingle inſtance throughout all nature, in which the impreſſions of inſtinct are obſervable, without ſome correſponding end. Every human

human being hath, indiſputably, an inſtinctive paſſion for long life; which prevails to the very laſt, in the aged, the feeble, and the dying. They who have loſt all reliſh for life, have yet a natural wiſh to protract it. We dread extinction: we tremble at the idea of annihilation. Was this unconquerable inſtinct implanted in man for no poſſible end? When the breath of man goeth forth, ſhall all his thoughts for ever periſh, though God himſelf hath impreſt on him a deſire to live—a deſire as forcible as conſcience—as irreſiſtible as fate?

There is no ſuch paſſion diſcoverable in the brutes. Though they inſtinctively take the proper meaſures for their preſervation, yet they aim not at the prolongation of life. Nor do they regret the loſs of life in the animals around them, nor fear it in themſelves. They have no proſpects into futurity, the diſruption of which can excite a ſingle emotion of grief. They have no permanent attachment. And the premature diſſolution of their natural relationſhip, occaſions only a momentary diſtreſs. They ſee death in their kindred with unconcern: and, at their own deceaſe, they die without any other than mere bodily ſenſation.

And

And yet (as I before hinted) the lives of ſome irrational animals are carried beyond threeſcore years and ten.

Doth it not ſeem an extreme hardſhip that, with all our longings for life, we ſhould exiſt a ſhorter time than even the beaſts themſelves, who have no wiſhes to be gratified by this extenſion of their being? Shall the raven be allowed to ſee our ſhort-lived generations paſs away before her eyes, with no compenſation to us periſhing mortals? Shall even "the half-reaſoning elephant" himſelf, be allowed this pre-eminence over man?

We, moreover, have not only a love of life, which cauſes our diſtreſſes and apprehenſions at the proſpect of death, in ourſelves and our friends, but we have, alſo, a ſtrongly-riveted deſire of immortality. 'Tis a vehement ardor which nothing can ſubdue. 'Tis not contented with the poor unſubſtantial poſſeſſion of a poſthumous reputation; though we wiſh, indeed, to ſtretch our fame beyond the grave—to perpetuate our memories among men—and, under the influence of this idea, are excited to laudable actions—to ſuch a conduct as may ſecure to us the good opinions of thoſe we leave behind, and tranſmit our characters to the ages

that

that are to come. But this viſionary life in the breath of others, is not enough to ſatisfy our deſires.

We further wiſh to have our conſciouſneſs preſerved, to be ſenſible, after our death, of the opinions entertained of us on earth; and to enjoy a real immortality, where our mortal faculties ſhall unceaſingly advance in perfection—ſhall beam with new acceſſions of glory; and where our affections ſhall be gratified by the full diſplay of objects, once ſo deſervedly attractive, and now refined for Heaven.

In addition to all theſe properties, qualities, or endowments, we naturally entertain a notion of a ſupreme Being; whom no other animal approaches by the ſlighteſt idea of his exiſtence.

Even the moſt ſavage people have ideas of a God—ſuch as inſpire them with fear, if not with love. They tremble at his omnipotence—they implore his mercy.

His wiſdom and benevolence as powerfully operate on more enlightened underſtandings, which are duly awakened, alſo, to the contemplation of his juſtice.

That

That the great Being who reigns over us, poſſeſſes, in an eminent degree, the attribute of wiſdom, we have had every reaſon to conclude, from the general appearances of animated nature.

A difficulty, however, hath occurred in theſe reſearches, which ſeems to derogate from this glorious attribute, and which will never admit of a ſatisfactory ſolution, whilſt we examine the preſent diſpenſation of things as unconnected with any other ſyſtem. Man, who, of all the animal world, is alone capable of conceiving any notion of a Deity—man, who can, alone, form ideas of the divine attributes, hath diſcovered this alarming difficulty in himſelf.

He hath ſeen himſelf created for no end!—ſince from this repreſentation it is plain, that his abilities were given him to little purpoſe, if they were only deſigned to ſupply the exigencies of his body; to which they are not always equal, and beyond which they, nevertheleſs, aſpire.

Yet, if God be an intelligent being, he hath ſent none of his creatures into the world, but with an adequate and wiſe deſign.

But I have been all this time repreſenting man in the moſt advantageous point of view: for, though I have diſplayed his infirmities, I have marked his performance as equal to his ability.

This, indeed, is a partial proſpect of his ways. We have contemplated the luminous part of the ſcene; but have overlooked the ſullen gloom that ſeems gathering in its black horizon. We have ſeen moral good amidſt human ſociety: moral evil, alas! hath been concealed from our ſight.

Man was created a free agent, with a will to act, and a liberty of acting according to the impulſe of his will. And he was created, at the ſame time, with a conſciouſneſs of right and wrong. To the ſuggeſtions, however, of his conſcience he is ſo inattentive, that he frequently deviates from the known and regular path of virtue, into the moſt intricate mazes of vice.

On glancing at the firſt ties of ſocial union, we ſee the huſband and the wife, equally negligent of the duties which they reciprocally owe one another.

We behold them violating the ſacredneſs of the marriage-bed; mutually urged on to work each other's woe, by the moſt virulent animoſity, and plunged in the abyſs of ſin and miſery.

Often,

Often, however, one of the parties pay a becoming regard to duty and virtue. Perhaps, an innocent and helpleſs woman is abandoned to be the prey of misfortune—to ſuffer every torment, from the exceſſes of her huſband, which human nature is capable of ſuffering.

We obſerve, again, the wicked parent, inhumanly torturing his children; and effecting, by every infernal method, their deſtruction, inſtead of preſervation.

Perhaps the objects of all this cruelty might have merited, by their gentleneſs and filial obedience, every rational indulgence, and every pleaſure that ſhould flow from virtuous conduct.

We detect, on the other hand, the viciouſneſs and fell ingratitude of the unnatural child, who, though no pains had been ſpared in the courſe of his education "to train him up in the way where "he ſhould go," yet wantons before his parents' eyes amidſt intemperance and revelry, and "brings "down the gray hairs of his father with ſorrow "to the grave."

Amidſt the more public walks of ſociety, we are ſtruck by every ſpecies of vice that can debaſe the nature of man.

In the governor, inſtead of juſtice and righteouſneſs, we ſee rapine and extortion; in the governed, diſſaffection, and rioting, and rebellion.

At one time the ruler is loaded with the imputation of every vice, and degraded into a ſtate of the loweſt debaſement; when, in fact, he hath uniformly acted his part, with a view to the welfare of his people. At another time, the ſubject is deprived of his property, through oppreſſion or falſe adjudication. He is puniſhed for imaginary crimes; or loſes his life by the treachery of the wicked—through the ſubornation of the perjured.

We ſee the rich exchanging temperance for luxury—debauched and enervated, in the lap of laſciviouſneſs: and, for benevolence and charity, we ſee them marked by churliſhneſs and avarice. And we ſurvey the poor, repining at their lot, and endeavouring to ſtep out of their ſphere, by the help of diſhoneſty and fraud—by every ſpecies of knaviſh circumvention—by thefts—by robbery, and murder.

And, often, the wealthy are ſo ill rewarded for their benevolence, that their beſt actions are aſcribed to the moſt unworthy motives: and the poor, though virtuous and ſubmiſſive, pine for hunger,

ger, unpitied, inſulted, abandoned: or, though they have earned their bread through a long laborious life, and contributed their honeſt exertions towards the ſubſiſtence of ſociety; yet, when depreſt by ſickneſs and old age, they are left to expire, with bitter pangs, in ſolitary wretchedneſs.

To all theſe evils, let us add the devaſtations of war, and of ſelf-created diſeaſe. Whilſt nations, inflamed againſt nations, ſeem to delight in maſſacre and blood; and whilſt a numerous train of malignant diſorders, introduced upon earth by our own wretched depravity, lay waſte mankind, in every dreadful form that can ſhock imagination; alas! when luſt and luxury—when indolence and voluptuouſneſs have diffuſed their contagion amongſt us, the innocent and the guilty fall victims alike to the fever that deſtroyeth at noon-day, and the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs! Thus death prematurely rages around us: and thus our lives, though but a ſpan, are ſtill cut ſhort, in hurry and confuſion—in miſery and ruin.

Amidſt all this portentous irregularity, every noble faculty of our minds is perverted into an inſtrument of evil. The paſſions, that might adorn our nature, are vitiated, or quenched. Our

reaſon

reaſon and our conſcience are perplexed and enfeebled—our natural hopes and wiſhes are extinguiſhed; and even our ſenſe of a God begins to languiſh; ſince, through the prevalence of iniquity, " the love of many waxeth cold."

This is a terrifying collection of human immoralities!

Let us look to the brutes, that are placed beneath our feet, that are reduced into ſubjection to the will of man—let us look to the brutes, in order to the ſupport of our compariſon, for a ſimilar collection. But where can we find a ſingle inſtance of perverſion or depravity, in theſe inferior animals?

" The oſtrich leaveth her eggs in the earth, and " warmeth them in the duſt, and forgetteth that " the foot may cruſh them, or that the wild beaſt " may break them—" ſhe is hardened againſt her " young ones, as though they were not her's." But ſhe adheres to the laws of her nature; and the ſcriptures aſſign the reaſon of her conduct—" Becauſe God hath deprived her of wiſdom; neither hath he imparted to her underſtanding."

Though the " eagle, who mounts up and makes " her neſt on high—who dwelleth and abideth in " the

" the rock, upon the crag of the rock, may ſeek " her prey from thence—though her young ones " ſuck up blood; and where the ſlain are, there " is ſhe;" yet her wildneſs and voracity are implanted in her by Heaven—yet her purſuits are regular and unerring.

In the ſame manner, the " fierceneſs of the " evening wolf," the " ſubtlety and ferocity of the " leopard", the deceitfulneſs of the crocodile, and the inſidiouſneſs of the ſerpent, are all characteriſtic qualities, originally impreſt, and never to be eraſed.

" The owl that mourneth in the deſart," or the poor ſequeſtered ſtag, deſerted by his comrades, whilſt ſeeming to implore their aid, may ſuggeſt to us the ideas of repining and melancholy—of unrelieved, uncommiſerated misfortune—of falſe and treacherous friendſhips. But, in truth, theſe appearances are ſpecious: among the brutes there is no murmuring or diſcontent—no tender ſympathies—no violated love.

And if, on obſerving the enmity which ſubſiſts between different kinds of animals, and even the fatal contentions among creatures of the ſame ſpecies, we are diſpoſed to deem them depraved

or

or unhappy; we ſhould remember that their antipathies, or hoſtilities, are according to nature, and that they experience no mental diſtreſſes—no ſuffering from an idea of calamity. Their pain is unconnected with the paſt or the future: confined to one point of time, it is a ſimple, momentary ſenſation.

Nevertheleſs, the apparent qualities of the brute creation may furniſh us with fine illuſtrations of morality. "Aſk the beaſts, and they ſhall teach "thee; or the fowls of the air, and they ſhall "tell thee." Obſerve their language, and their "ways; for they reaſon, not contemptibly!"

The conjugal and parental tenderneſs of the dove; the affection of the pelican to her young; and the innocent playfulneſs of the lamb, are ſweet and lively pictures. And the regular conduct of gregarious or ſocial animals, may ſupply us with inſtructive leſſons; whether we mark "the bees "that follow their leader," or the "locuſts who, "having no king, yet go forth, all of them, by "bands;" or the "ſtork in the heavens, that "knoweth her appointed times;" or the "turtle, "the crane, or the ſwallow, that obſerve the time "of their coming."

The

The rich and the poor may diſcover a ſchool of morality in the ways of the ant and of the bee, who both prepare their meat in ſummer, with a vigilance inimitable by man.

Nor are we to paſs over their prudence, their induſtry, their œconomy, their neatneſs, and their temperance.

We may learn gratitude, fidelity, and patience from the ſpaniel that licks our feet—" from the " horſe that knoweth his owner, and the aſs his " maſter's crib."

The cares of the world ſhould reſt eaſy upon us, when we conſider the ravens, fed by Providence—" the young ravens that call upon God."

But, alas! while all the brute creation enjoy their liberty and independence—while the beaſts have the range of the mountains for their paſture, and the birds ſtretch their wings towards Heaven, or ſing among the branches—while all things living are filled with plenteouſneſs; man, however innocent, is enthralled—however deſerving, is often wretched, through the caprices and the crimes of his fellows.

" The race is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong." The wicked often triumph

in their wickedneſs; and trample upon the good, unpuniſhed, unavenged. Alas! we behold the "tears of the righteous, who, on earth, have no "comforter;" and who look for deliverance to the grave alone, "where the wicked ceaſe from "troubling, and where the weary are at reſt!"

Such is the inevitable miſery of man. We are not only created for no end, but abſolutely created to be miſerable, if in this life only we have hope.

Yet the juſtice and benevolence of God, are as inſeparable from his eſſence, as his wiſdom.

If, then, he is a juſt and benevolent being, he hath predeſtinated none of his creatures to unavoidable wretchedneſs: he hath ſurely deſigned all, to be immediately or ultimately happy.

From this whole comparative view it is indiſputably clear, that the preſent ſtate doth not anſwer the ends of our being; though the life of the brutes ſeems ſufficiently complete. Since they have a mind intended only to ſubſerve their bodies, and that does not aſpire beyond the preſent ſtate; and ſince, acting from certain general determinations, which lead them, invariably, to what is agreeable to their nature, they have no moral

moral action to be accounted for — the brutes may deſervedly periſh: they have no intereſt in a future diſpenſation. But man, having faculties and affections to be laborioufly and painfully exerciſed, that look beyond the preſent ſcene, and eagerly tend to immortality; and having moral action to be accounted for, ſince he acts from particular determinations of his conſcience and his will—man cannot deſervedly periſh.

Surely, then, this ſtate muſt be a ſtate of trial—the next a ſtate of retribution. Surely, "God ſhall "judge the righteous and the wicked."

All the ends of our being are here fully determined — all the attributes of the Divinity ſhine forth, in beautiful ſplendor. Our own ways are clear; and the ways of God are juſtified to man.

This is the ſeries of reaſoning—theſe the concluſions, which the Heathens themſelves have drawn in the warmth of ſpeculation Yet a variety of difficulties occurred to abate their ardor, reduce them to uncertainty, and even compel them to renounce their ſyſtems. After all his ſublime argumentation on the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of recompenſe, even Cicero ſuf-

fered himſelf to be involved in doubt; and, abandoning his comfortable hopes of an hereafter, to be again brought down upon a level with the beaſts that periſh.

The path, however, which the Heathen traced with heſitation, by the glimmering ſtar of reaſon, the Chriſtian can go over with confidence by the ſame light; ſince he hath ſeen it in the brightneſs that ſtreams from the ſun of revelation.

Chriſtianity informs us, that our bodies are vile and corruptible—that "if we, through the ſpirit, "mortify the deeds of the body, we ſhall live"—that we are "ſaved by hope"—that we are, alſo, "to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling"—that "it is appointed unto all men, "once to die; but after this the judgment"—that "they who mourn, ſhall be comforted"—that "they who ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy"—and that "all things, in ſhort, work together for good, "to them who love God."

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XVI.

HEBREWS x. 32.

Call to remembrance the former days.

THE author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, having exhorted his brethren to cultivate the benevolence and harmony ſo peculiarly enforced by their new profeſſion, proceeds to obſerve, that they ought "not to forſake the aſſembling "themſelves together;" ſince, at the friendly meeting, they would find the beſt opportunities of encouraging and emulating one another in love and good works.

And nothing (he ſeems to intimate) would be more conducive to this end, than, on theſe occaſions, to "*call to remembrance the former days*"—the days in which they had been companions, endeared to each other by mutual ſympathy.

Such

Such a recollection as this, muſt, in all circumſtances, contribute much to moral improvement. 'Tis commonly recommended to us, indeed, to take a retroſpect of our paſt lives, in the ſilence and tranquillity of retirement. To commune with our own hearts without interruption, we are inſtructed "to enter into our cloſets," and be ſtill.

There are ſome ſeaſons, however, when communing with our hearts in ſociety, may produce effects no leſs beneficial. Whilſt ſolitary communion will open a more affectionate intercourſe with God, it is for ſocial communion to expand the boſom into a warmer charity towards man.

And I know very few meetings more happily calculated for this purpoſe, than the preſent—when viewed under its beſt regulated form.

Old companions, meeting together in the place of their education, may find various ſubjects of pleaſureable and of painful recollection; to engage the meditations of reaſon, and to exerciſe their tendereſt ſenſibilities.

On reviſiting the ſeminary where we grew up together, we "*call to remembrance the former days*;" with a variety of mixed emotions, which, if permitted

mitted to have their natural effect, may contribute to amend our hearts, and to influence our lives.

The view of our puerile character, where cheerfulneſs and ſimplicity ſhine unalloyed—the amuſements of our earlier years, with many little circumſtances that engage and pleaſe—the proficiency we had made in our ſchool-learning—and the names and the fates of our ſchool companions, (particularly thoſe of our more intimate friends) are obviouſly ſuggeſted to us all—are involuntarily preſented to our memories; though, perhaps, we do not ſufficiently contemplate them.

I would wiſh to detain you, therefore, for a few minutes, with ſome curſory obſervations on the ſeveral topics I have mentioned.

Looking back to the years we ſpent at ſchool, we are fond of converſing on that freedom from anxiety, thoſe pure ſpirits and lively thoughts, and that character of ſimplicity and innocence which ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhed them.

And the preſent troubles and temptations, that often diſturb our quiet and endanger our virtue, muſt form a mournful contraſt with theſe delightful images.

Many

Many there are, who, embarraſſed by intricacies, perplexed by difficulties, and diſtreſt by calamities, are willing to detach themſelves, if poſſible, from their preſent ſituation, to raiſe up again the ſcenes of youth, and to graſp at that phantom of felicity, which memory may diſplay. But the ſources, perhaps, of juvenile ſatisfaction are locked up, to be opened no more.

It is fortunate, if they have not themſelves to accuſe, for a part of what they ſuffer—if they can attribute the loſs of their tranquillity to nothing elſe, than the vexations which attend on common cares, or the diſtreſſes which are inflicted by Providence. A too eaſy accommodation to the faſhions and practices of the world, is, frequently, I fear, the cauſe whence their comparative unhappineſs originates. The ardor of youthful ſpirits is ſoon damped by the coldneſs of diſtant civilities; and the livelineſs of fancy quickly loſt amidſt formality, unfeelingneſs and artifice. That unſuſpecting openneſs, and thoſe expanded notions, that mark the enchanting ſeaſon of our youth, are almoſt invariably repreſt by our commerce with the ſelfiſh and the mean. The experience which we gradually acquire, points out to us the neceſſity of vigilance

vigilance and circumſpection, amidſt a world that is ever ready to ſurprize our ſimplicity. And happy are they, who, while they exerciſe a prudent caution, are able to retain their ingenuouſneſs untainted by ſuſpicion.

Again, our generoſity is inſenſibly contracted by that attention to our intereſts which our ſtation, perhaps, impoſes.

Obſerving, in early youth, the mercenary tranſactions of thoſe around us, we deſpiſe the ſordid multitude who propoſe gain as the chief object of regard. But our contempt imperceptibly wears away, as we become familiarized to vulgar opinions and purſuits. And happy are they, in this caſe alſo, who, perceiving the proper line of conduct, are ſufficiently attentive to the cares of life; without abandoning thoſe generous ſentiments which are ſo conſonant with the ſocial affections and the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. The longer we live, however, the more lucrative will be our views; if we do not revive the ſpirit of our earlier days, by frequent meditations in ſolitude, but, particularly, by ſuch benevolent communications with one another, as the obſervation of the preſent anniverſary was wiſely deſigned to introduce.

There are none, I truſt, of my audience, who painfully follow me in the track of theſe reflexions. They feel, I hope, a delightful conſciouſneſs of having preſerved their purity of ſentiment, untarniſhed, amidſt the fraudulence of the deſigning, or the ſelfiſhneſs of the illiberal—of having uniformly avoided every dark intrigue—of having never ſoothed unwarranted ambition, or countenanced a ſpecious hypocriſy. Thus circumſtanced, we ſhall continue to reliſh the ſweet ſatisfactions, that ariſe from the memory of the paſt; and contemplate with peculiar pleaſure, the proſpect of juvenile innocence.

After a general review of our youthful character, I think the moſt obvious ſubjects of recollection, are the amuſements of our earlier years. In recollecting theſe we joyfully aſſiſt one another; whilſt we recount a diverſity of harmleſs recreations which ſerved to unbend the mind, to enliven and refreſh it, and to diſpoſe it for reſuming thoſe ſevere ſtudies which neceſſity obliged us to purſue. In conſidering the paſt, however, it behoves us to connect it with the preſent. For thus only can our reflexions tend to our real edification. "When "we were children (as the apoſtle ſays) we ſpoke "as children — we underſtood as children — we "thought

" thought as children: but when we became men,
" we put away childiſh things."

In this, ſurely, we have done right. But what have we gained in ſubſtitution? The amuſements of more advanced age, I am afraid, will not always bear the teſt of examination. Though our puerile days are over, and our puerile ſports are diſmiſſed, we are too apt to be gratified by diverſions, which ill become us, as men. The diſſipated, irregular entertainments, which occupy ſo much of our attention, can ſcarcely be oppoſed with a glow of complacency, to the little paſtimes of our careleſs childhood. The waſte of time and of fortune, the ruin of the conſtitution, and the loſs of reputation, are the repeated conſequences of our manlier pleaſures. In ſuch caſes, the mind ſinks down with the debilitated body, too often loſt in ſenſeleſs ſtupefaction; to be awakened by no other emotion, than the anguiſh of diſappointment or deſpair. But to inſiſt on this point would be perfectly unſeaſonable: I would only hint to you the true uſe of diverſions, by referring you to a moral conſideration of our long-forſaken paſtimes. They were evidently intended to recreate our minds; not to engroſs our attention. They were meant

to inſpire us with ſuch agreeable ſenſation, as might relax the ſeverity of our proper employment; not, ſurely, to embitter our peace, or wound our conſcience. And if, in our younger years, a few harmleſs amuſements, too much intruding upon time, might ſo diſturb our ſtudies as to become alarming interruptions; how much ought we to dread that inordinate love of pleaſure, which may now break in, on far more important occupations, and render us totally incapable of performing the great duties of life! That ſchool boy, only, I think, can be unhappy, who ſuffers himſelf to be ſeduced from his ſtudies by ill-timed levities. Irregularity is the bane of his enjoyment. Picture, then, the effects of unreſtrained exceſſes—of lawleſs deviations from the right path, on the more extenſive field of human life!

Amidſt theſe meditations on our former diverſions, we neceſſarily fall into ſome reflexions on our former ſtudies; though the latter is not always a ſubject, on which we like to communicate our thoughts or feelings. 'Tis natural, however, to reflect on the proficiency we had made in our ſchool-learning; whilſt we review, with fond partiality, the place of our education. The very

benches

benches (according to the idea of a wiſe Ancient) the very benches that were formerly ſo familiar to us, call back to our remembrance the gradations of our ſcholarſhip, and our emulous competitors who accelerated the progreſs.

On one ſeat, we diſcover memorials of the force of emulation, that urged us on to conquer difficulties, which appeared inſuperable; and which, otherwiſe, perhaps, we ſhould never have ſurmounted. On another, we recollect our initiation into a new language: on another, our introduction to a favorite claſſic, which, from the period of our opening taſte, we have ever read with more than common delight. By the help of ſuch aſſociations, we may note, perhaps, our gradual advances in knowledge, with tolerable exactneſs: and, forming a pretty clear idea of our ſcholarſhip at the time we quitted ſchool, we unavoidably aſk ourſelves, whether we retain it, at this preſent hour; whether we have improved it by freſh acquiſitions; or, whether we have loſt it, through negligence or neceſſity?

There are ſome who are obliged, not only to retain their claſſical learning, but to make continual additions to it. They who have been bred

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to phyſic or divinity, in particular, are required to poſſeſs a competent knowledge of the claſſics, as connected with their profeſſion.

The phyſician, or divine, who is ignorant of the learned languages, may juſtly be conſidered as a diſgrace to his order. The leiſure and opportunities which the latter more peculiarly enjoys, ought, doubtleſs, to be employed in the cultivation of the liberal arts. The Church of England expects her clergy, to be learned as well as religious. And with much reaſon: for, unleſs they are thoroughly acquainted with the evidence on which Chriſtianity ſtands, 'tis impoſſible they can defend it againſt the attacks of the enemy. To be acquainted with this evidence, 'tis neceſſary to poſſeſs a knowledge of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and many other ſubjects, of which our utmoſt ſchool attainments are but a very ſlight foundation. On the uſe, however, of claſſical literature, 'tis by no means my intention to expatiate. My predeceſſors, on this occaſion, have ſufficiently enlarged on its general utility!

I would obſerve only, that they, whoſe profeſſions are ſo cloſely connected with literature, are guilty of a very criminal neglect in employing their talents on frivolous ſubjects, or in overlooking

looking the opportunities which are ſo amply afforded them.

In the mean time, I ſhould be far from diſcommending thoſe, who, occupied by cares very little allied to literature, ſhould have entirely given up the claſſics. The ſtudy of the learned languages may be inconſiſtent with their occupation. It might interrupt the more important concerns of life: it might draw off their attention from the intereſts of their families.

There are many, therefore, whom I would not blame or diſcourage, though they have forgotten the whole of what they had learnt at a grammar-ſchool. They have no reaſon to be diſpleaſed with themſelves, if they have not neglected other ſpecies of mental cultivation, which may be judged more ſuitable to their profeſſion. And he, who hath uniformly attended to his proper calling, is a much more reſpectable character than the man who, wandering from his line of life, may boaſt a familiar acquaintance with the Greek or Latin languages. It may be aſked, indeed, of what uſe are theſe ſchool-acquirements to thoſe, who ſoon find themſelves under the neceſſity of abandoning or neglecting them? Perhaps none.

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There are ſome, I am well aware, who aſſert, that a very ſuperficial acquaintance with the learned languages, introduces us the more readily to our own, and gives a facility to Engliſh compoſition. But ſuch a mode of learning Engliſh, appears to me, to be rather circuitous. Whether the direct ſtudy of our own tongue, may not be a more expeditious as well as efficacious method of attaining it, is a queſtion which it would be impertinent to diſcuſs.

For thoſe who have retained, or thoſe who have loſt their ſchool-learning, I would only add, that, I truſt, they have not ſuperinduced on it, or ſubſtituted in its place, any falſe or futile acquiſitions. The ſcholar may be aſſured, that a great many of our faſhionable accompliſhments will reflect no pleaſing luſtre on his knowledge. And he who hath, in reality, no leiſure for the claſſics, is unpardonable indeed, if he hath yet devoted his time to ſtudies which are unprofitable and vain. I have dwelt on this topic much longer than I intended. Let us haſten to reflexions more generally intereſting.

I had remarked to you, that the very benches to which we were once accuſtomed, may be the ſilent

ſilent memorialiſts of our claſſical purſuits. But they may lead us, perhaps, to a more ſoothing kind of meditation; whilſt they revive the images of our ſchool-companions, with whom we had ſo often converſed or ſported in our childhood, but who have been many years far removed out of our ſight. They may exhibit to us the fleeting portraits of a numerous train, whom we imperfectly remember, and who ſeem to paſs away, like ſhadows, to our dizzy memory. Of many, indeed, we can barely recal the names—with no idea of their perſons: of ſome we have loſt every trace. Among ſo vaſt a number, how few are left within our reach! How very few, though inclination prompt them, can aſſemble together and meet their friends, on a day which hath been long known to all, however diſtant, as ſet apart for our ſocial gratulations!

What a variety of deſtinations, characters, and fates, even in thoſe who diſtinctly recur to us, might we contemplate amidſt the maze of accident, the quickſands of temptation, and the waſte of time! Some we may obſerve proſperous and flouriſhing; others conflicting with misfortune—ſome who have been drawn away from virtue, by

the ſorceries of ſin; and others who, perhaps, have early died, cut off in all the bloom of life! More particularly, we may enumerate the friends of our youth, who have been long ſeparated from us, through unavoidable contingencies—who have expired without our comfort or aſſiſtance, or who have violated the ſanctity of friendſhip! Painful, indeed, is the laſt conſideration. It muſt ſtab the feeling heart, to memorize affections now alienated by the inſidiouſneſs of the world: it muſt be ſtill more intolerable to have been injured or inſulted by a once beloved aſſociate. "Had it been "an open enemy that had done me this diſhonor, "then I could have borne it: but it was even, "thou, my companion, my guide and mine own "familiar friend!"

A very little experience is thus ſufficient to ſhew us a moſt affecting picture of the mutability of human life, and the frailty of human nature! When we conſider the quick fluctuation of objects on ſo uncertain a ſcene, we are taught to withdraw our affections from earth—to ſet our hearts on leſs tranſitory things! When we obſerve that diverſity of accidents to which our old companions have been expoſed, amidſt theſe manifold viciſſitudes,

viciſſitudes, we no longer feel the bitterneſs of ſtrife—the workings of malevolence or envy; but, diſmiſſing all uncharitable thoughts, become kindly-affectioned towards our fellow-travellers—endeavouring to conſole and ſuſtain them on a pilgrimage of labor and trouble—and mutually forgiving one another, "even as God, for Chriſt's "ſake, hath forgiven us."

And when we ſee ſo many treſpaſſing againſt conſcience and reaſon, through the feebleneſs of irreſolution and a too eaſy compliance with faſhion and example, yet retaining principles of goodneſs ſufficient to bring them back into the right way, had they ſome kind adviſer or ſupporter; we are here, alſo, diſpoſed to imitate our bleſſed Lord, who made every allowance for the infirmities of man—who compaſſionated the unfortunate offender, whilſt the generous ſpark of virtue ſtill lurked within his boſom.

Even though ourſelves have ſuffered through fallacious friendſhips, let us not judge harſhly of the human heart; but, aware of the deluſions of vanity and pride, and the power of popular cuſtom, regard the diſſolution of our early connexions as a common caſe, which hath often been

lamented, though it is little to be remedied in our preſent ſtate of imbecility.

Theſe ſeveral recollections may be found highly uſeful, if let to make their due impreſſion. And, I flatter myſelf, the hints I have ſuggeſted, will be as candidly received as they were well intended.

TO conclude——Let us endeavour to diſengage ourſelves, as much as poſſible, from the vanities and corruptions around us, by "*calling to remem-*" *brance the former days,*" when we were as yet ignorant of the world. May it be our conſolation, that we have never ſwerved from undiſſembling truth, without the heart-ake or the ſelf-reproach that argues ingenuouſneſs, or ſpeaks repentance! May it be our pride, that when we relinquiſhed our childiſh amuſements, we never entered into vicious indulgencies, or diſſipated pleaſures! May it be our happineſs, that we have cultivated the talent Heaven intruſted to us, for the beſt and wiſeſt purpoſes—if not according to the courſe of ſchool-education, yet according to our ſituation, and our calling! And may we ever, in memo-

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rizing our youthful aſſociates, be delighted to reflect, that we have rejoiced with their joys, and ſympathized with their ſorrows; and that we have never cauſed a ſlighted friend to mourn our inſincerity!

For the preſent, let us withdraw to the place of ſocial meeting, with hearts full of benevolence—with an affectionate partiality for one another, as ſchool-companions and friends.

Let us devote the day to blameleſs converſation, to cheerfulneſs and harmony, and to a temperate enjoyment of the good things which Providence hath given us! And when we mingle again with the world, let us not forget one another; but, parting, let us hope, that God Almighty will preſerve us for other "*remembrances of former days*"—for other delightful recollections of our juvenile ſimplicity and innocence and truth!

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XVII.

I. Cor. viii. 4.

Knowledge puffeth up.

THERE is a deſcription of men, who, poſſeſſing a ſincere diſpoſition to be made acquainted with the great truths of religion, have yet, from their occupations, but little leiſure for ſtudy or reſearch. In an age, like the preſent, when the affectation of general knowledge is become ſo faſhionable, that it pervades all ranks of people, their ſituation is peculiarly delicate and perilous. The ſincerity of their wiſhes, in reſpect to religious improvement, may well recommend them to our attention. Their caſe deſerves to be excluſively conſidered.

The general diffuſion of knowledge is, doubtleſs, a happy circumſtance for mankind. But the fountain

fountain of ſcience is, perhaps, too eaſily acceſſible. There are many, who now approaching it, appear to drink deep, when they have barely taſted the ſtream. And, ſince a little ſmattering hath ſo frequently been impoſed on the world for real learning; they, whoſe ſtation is eminently propitious to literary purſuits, and whoſe duty it is to inveſtigate the paths of ſcience, have been found to acquieſce in ignorance, or, at beſt, mere ſuperficial attainments, as long as they enjoy the credit for what they ought to have acquired. Indeed, many of them repoſe in indolence, or exult in the ſucceſs of their impoſture; whilſt they have all the honors and all the promotion that are due only to decided merit.

From ſuch characters, that exiſt under various profeſſions and in various conditions, originates all that maſs of publication; which, pretending to new diſcoveries and unprejudiced opinion, would ſuperſede the writings of the ancients, or explode the notions of our forefathers. Hence, too, we derive thoſe ſpecious productions, that profeſs to lead the young adventurer, through ſhort and luring ways, to a rapid acquiſition of the truth. Thus knowledge made eaſy is echoed from every quarter: and the deluded multitude become their

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own phyſicians, or their own religious inſtructors, ſecure in the eſtabliſhed ſanity both of the body and the ſoul!

To caution the well-diſpoſed Chriſtian, whom the neceſſity of his ſituation may prevent from ſearching matters to the bottom, againſt all ſuch ſciolifts in religion, ſhall be the ſubject of the preſent diſcourſe. To this end, I ſhall endeavour to diſcriminate the writings that may ſhake his faith, and endanger his ſalvation.

The perſons, whom I would particularly addreſs, ought, in the firſt place, to beware of thoſe books which are avowedly hoſtile to the belief of a Chriſtian. They would find it rather a dangerous experiment to meet the objections to religion, at the time when they are unacquainted with the arguments in its favor. To converſe with the enemies of Chriſtianity, before they have been introduced to its friends, would be not only hazardous but abſurd. And yet a ſtrong curioſity to gain ſome information on ſo important a ſubject as an attack on their religious profeſſion, hath often impelled illiterate Chriſtians to enquire into the nature of that attack. If, on their approach, they found

found hoſtilities commencing, with an oppoſition to the principles which are the groundwork of every religion, ſuch as the exiſtence of the Deity, or his creation and ſuperintendance of the univerſe; their own unaided ſenſe, perhaps, might carry them far enough to ſee the erroneouſneſs and futility of ſo miſerable a contention. The wretch who might preſume to hold forth in his fantaſtic theory, a world exiſting from all eternity, independent of a creator or preſerver, muſt appear, to the meaneſt apprehenſion, as contemptible in his reaſoning, as he is inſolent in his obtruſion of it.

If, again, they were to ſee Chriſtianity indirectly aſſailed by a repreſentation of its abuſes, or the unworthy conduct of its profeſſional friends; the ſpectacle, inſtead of weakening their faith, might only excite their indignation.

But they are ſurprized at the mortality or materiality of the ſoul, maintained by a long ſeries of metaphyſicl deduction. Dazzled by the plauſible appearance of a few leading poſitions, they unwittingly go deeper into the ſubject; whilſt they frivolouſly endeavour to graſp what muſt baffle their ſtrongeſt efforts. Utterly incapable of recovering their exhauſted ſpirits, they turn around them to a

view more ſtriking; where the proofs, on which the truth of Chriſtianity repoſes, are daringly controverted—where the prophecies are repreſented as unintelligible fiction or fortuitous coincidencies, and the miracles are degraded into colluſion or impoſture. In the mean time, they are ſtartled at the appearance of inconſiſtencies, or contradictions, in the ſcripture-ſtory; at occurrences, ſeemingly ridiculous; at prophetic paſſages in the New Teſtament, apparently miſquoted or miſconſtrued; and at a vaſt variety of difficulties, many of which may be raiſed by the moſt unlettered, but few of which can be ſolved without much preparatory learning. For we ought to be aware that difficulties are ſtarted, even by children, in the common tranſactions of the day; the ſolution of which requires great ingenuity, and is ſometimes, indeed, abſolutely impoſſible. The cauſes of the moſt familiar appearances in nature, are frequently impenetrable by human ſagacity. Yet he, who hath ſuffered himſelf to be perplexed by ſuch objections as we have tranſitorily noticed, ought to be informed, that ſome are but the futile ideas of ancient ſcepticiſm, revived by the ſuperficial gleaners of antiquity—that others might be proved fallacious by

a ſkill

a ſkill in logic to detect the fallacy; and that others might be ſhewn to be abſurd or unfounded, through a knowledge of languages, and ſacred hiſtory, and a certain ſhare of theological erudition. It is not, therefore, without reaſon, that the unſkilled, or uninformed are cautioned againſt interfering with their religious enemies.

But, alas! it is not every enemy that comes forward with a fair declaration of war. "There "is treachery, O Ahaziah!" Treachery, indeed, there is, of the deepeſt dyes, in thoſe who ſap the foundations of religion, by the diverſe unſuſpected methods which are now ſo prevalent amongſt us. In this reading age, collateral eſſays, digreſſions and annotations upon religion, with ludicrous hints and doubts, and ſly conjectures, are miſchiefs almoſt unavoidable, even by the more timid or circumſpect.

We muſt ſtand upon our guard againſt every book we read! Each new uncharacterized production approaches us with a queſtionable ſhape: and even what we had welcomed, as the ſource of our inſtruction, we have, at length, lamented as the bane to our morality and peace. Infidelity aſſumes various ſhapes, and wounds with various

weapons. She appears in the guiſe of ſtern philoſophy—the inflexible friend of virtue; the ſcrupulous companion of truth: or, ſhe ſlides into eſteem, in the deceitful ſhape of ſmooth, amuſive hiſtory: or, in the dreſs of the voyager, ſhe engages by her attractive novelties: or, under the form of romance, ſhe "enters into widows' houſes, "and leads captive ſilly women, laden with their "ſins!" Her weapon is, at one time, as the ſtilletto, that ſtabs in darkneſs—at another, as the arrow, that flieth at noon-day. And her wound is like the ſting of the aſpic; that brings on gentle ſlumbers—but it brings on death! Such is her inſinuating lubricity; and ſuch the deadlineſs of her poiſon!

Hence it may eaſily be imagined, that even they, who, with determined reſolution, avoid the writings of profeſſed unbelievers, muſt ſometimes meet paſſages unfriendly to their tenets, in unſuſpected authors. Let them not, in this caſe, paſs over too lightly, what may have thus aſſailed them by ſurprize, as if ſecure in the ſtability of their faith. For prejudices againſt religion often inſenſibly ſteal into the mind, in conſequence of an oblique hint, or ſneer, or inuendo; and retain a

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laſting influence, when the writer, who threw out the obnoxious ſentiment, is entirely loſt to memory. Such places, therefore, ought, by no means, to be left unexamined. The unlearned may not be equal to the taſk of examination; but let them apply, for aſſiſtance, to ſome abler perſon, who will, probably, remove every ſuſpicion that might have ariſen, and reſtore them to their religious tranquillity. This covert mode, however, of diſſeminating infidel opinions, generally betrays the conſciouſneſs of a bad cauſe, that will not bear to be openly defended.

But for thoſe, whoſe caſe we have been conſidering, it is not enough to ſhelter themſelves from the enemies of the truth, whether open or concealed. Even the friends of religion have, in ſome inſtances, injured its cauſe. If a great book be a great evil, polemical writings have been particularly miſchievous, through their immoderate length and tedioufneſs. To peruſe the whole body of controverſial divinity, or to enter into the ſpirit of every controverſy that ariſes, can ſcarcely be recommended, without ſome exceptions, even to the miniſters of the Goſpel. But the uneducated man, who, with all his deficiencies about him,

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takes an intereſt in religious controverſies, will be ſadly deceived if he think he ſhall, hence, corroborate his faith. He will ſee many points diſputed, which he before deemed indiſputable; and he will even ſee tenets abandoned, on which he founded his deareſt hopes. And the diſingenuous feints and artifice of the combatants (too frequently obſervable on ſuch occaſions) their haughtineſs, their anger, and their malevolence, can ſcarcely fail to impreſs him with ideas unfavourable to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and leave perplexing doubts upon his mind reſpecting the real genius of that religion, which its wiſeſt advocates have appeared unable to aſcertain, and the diſcuſſion of which hath occaſioned endleſs jarrings among the mightieſt of its champions. In the mean time, the combatants have diſappeared from his view—the clouds of uncertainty have intercepted the proſpect—and he hath retired from the field, in a ſtate of miſerable diſtraction.

Yet there exiſts a ſuſpicious kind of publication (very oppoſite in its nature to the polemical production) which hath gained a conſiderable degree of popularity, through the faſhionable lightneſs and airineſs

airineſs of its texture. They who dread polemics, will peruſe with eagerneſs a flimſy treatiſe upon religion; eſpecially if it poſſeſs novelty of manner, or the graces of language.

It is much to be regretted, that the general propenſity for knowledge eaſily acquired, hath been humoured by ſome of the moſt eminent in genius and literature. In conformity with this inclination, they publiſh, in defence of Chriſtianity, ſhort eſſays, which attract the attention of thoſe who are even unacquainted with its firſt plain principles. Theſe eſſays have a falſe and ſuperficial glare, that recommends them to notice: they ſeldom convey any ſolid information. If they do not abſolutely contradict the word of God, they often repreſent events and characters in a new light, from too viſible an affectation of novelty. But they frequently propagate indifference by their palpable coldneſs, in regard to religious truths; and unſettle the mind, by giving up to the adverſaries of religion, a variety of points which its true friends have inflexibly maintained. Too great an eaſineſs of conceſſion, is a failing, againſt which the liberal-minded ought always to be on their guard. Though the fortreſs of religion is ſtrong

in itſelf, there is a manifeſt impolicy in ſurrendering the outworks of it to its enemies.

This laſt ſpecies of publication is, certainly, leſs obnoxious to cenſure than the firſt three which I have attempted to characterize. At the ſame time, the uneducated, for whoſe ſake I have thrown together theſe curſory obſervations, would do right to avoid ſuch queſtionable writings; which (even if they be admitted to be harmleſs) have but little pretenſions to our eſteem.

Thus have I endeavoured to caution the uninformed againſt evils, which are ſo obvious in the preſent age, that even our villagers have not eſcaped their contagion.

The great fault is, that every one pretends to judge of religion, however ſlight may be his knowledge of it. Yet be it conſidered, that Chriſtianity was not revealed to man, as a theory, on which he might exerciſe his wit or his genius. It was, chiefly, imparted to him, as a rule for the conduct of life.

If the unlearned, therefore, muſt have recourſe to books, let them have recourſe to elementary and practical treatiſes. But let them draw their reading

reading within a narrow compaſs, leſt their information be confuſed or falſe. And let them read with a ſincere deſire to make advances in ſuch knowledge as may influence their practice.

After all, they would do well to remember, that thoſe parts of ſacred writ which it is abſolutely their duty to underſtand, are ſo perſpicuous, that they require no comment.

And happy, indeed, are they, who, with no ambition to know more than God hath given them to know, have received his gracious revelations with humility and content! Happy are they, who, from children, have known the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation!

DISCOURSE XVIII.

I. TIMOTHY v. 13.

And withal, they learn to be idle, wandering about from houſe to houſe.

THE females whoſe characters St. Paul touches in this epiſtle to Timothy, have their exact counterpart in the preſent age. A contempt of the domeſtic duties, is evidently the prevailing vice of our modern women. To prefer an intercourſe with thoſe who have little concern for her happineſs, to the converſation of her family and friends who muſt be neceſſarily intereſted in her welfare, this is the taſte avowed by the faſhionable lady, and triumphantly oppoſed to ſentiment and reaſon. And ſo infectious is the ſpirit of licentiouſneſs, that even the humble and obſcure are become ambitious of imitating their ſuperiors, by

ſacrificing

ſacrificing the moſt important cares to a frivolous and diſſolute ſociety.

If the votaries of diſſipation will allow themſelves but a moment's reflexion on the manner in which they annihilate their lives; they muſt, at once, perceive conſequences the moſt fatal, connected with ſuch levity and corruption.

And, though they may ſucceed for a ſhort ſpace, in repelling all ſerious thought the very inſtant it ſeems ready to intrude itſelf; yet they will as often ſoothe their conſciences with the reſolution, to alter their mode of life at ſome convenient ſeaſon.

On conſidering the manner in which the higher order of females contrive to waſte their time, the moſt obvious appears to be that of dreſs: for they literally "*learn to be idle*," while they apply themſelves with all diligence to ſo multifarious an art; vainly endeavouring to heighten the effect of their perſons, by a vaſt complication of abſurd and fluctuating ornament. Had the apoſtle been a witneſs to ſuch admirable inventions, he might have obſerved, that a great portion of their hours was occupied in *preparing* to "*wander from houſe* "*to houſe*." The knowledge of dreſs appears, in

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truth, to be their ſole acquiſition. 'Tis in this ſcience alone, that they have made any conſiderable proficiency; while they have acquired the ſingular power of thinking without reflexion, and labouring without action. If the end of the painful proceſs be to render their perſons more engaging, they are much miſtaken in the means by which they would accompliſh it. The decorum of the pulpit forbids my expatiating on ſo trivial a point: a moment's thought, however, will ſhew, that, though blemiſhes may be concealed, yet beauty can never be improved by a weight of unnatural decorations. But the various modes of dreſs are, in general, adopted, without the influence of any determinate motive. The varieties of faſhion are too fleeting to be examined. Every new appearance a female aſſumes, is the effect of blind and mechanical imitation. Her change is inſtantaneous: and ſhe follows the ſhifting multitude without end or aim.

But let us purſue her, from the receſſes of vanity, to the ſcenes to which ſhe hath been daily familiarized, in the routine of hollow and vicious communication. If ſhe "wander about from houſe "to houſe," the laws of faſhion may occaſionally interpoſe, to preclude the evils of the tongue.

The

The diſtant air of ceremonial attentions, ill according with flippancy or ſlander, requires only the ſpiritleſs alternations of ſilent pauſes and complimentary formalities. 'Tis in the circles, where ſhe is permitted to converſe without reſtraint, that ſhe betrays the emptineſs of her mind, if not the depravity of her temper and inclinations. If her converſation be what the world calls innocent, it can never be ſaid to improve either the heart or the head, by the diffuſion of one rational ſentiment. Indeed, momentarily to exerciſe the underſtanding or the feelings, is a point to which it ſeldom aſpires. The ſubjects of this harmleſs diſcourſe are, at beſt, as trifling as can be well imagined. To introduce a topic, to the diſcuſſion of which the powers of the moſt vacant and illiterate mind are unequal, is deemed an unpardonable offence againſt the rules of good breeding.

But the converſation of the modiſh female does not always run in a tenor, which even the world can rate, as harmleſs. Were "frivolous" its worſt epithet, we might be inclined to view her character in a more favourable light. Idleneſs, however, paves the way for all the progeny of evil. Whilſt ſhe "wanders about from houſe to houſe," a mind,

naturally

naturally turned to the obſervation of unimportant objects, will lead her to mark down, with ſcrupulous minuteneſs, the petty occurrences of every family ſhe frequents. Theſe, in addition to the defamatory ſtories in daily circulation, will furniſh her with exhauſtleſs materials for the exerciſe of ſcandal. Though in the haunts of levity and vice, ſhe might often detect flagitiouſneſs enough to preclude the neceſſity of invention, ſhe diſcovers a ſtrange propenſity to overlook the more cenſurable offences; collecting every trivial incident and foible to employ her lying talent, while ſhe gratifies her vanity or ſpleen. In her preſence, virtue affords no ſecurity. The leſs vulnerable a character is, the more expoſed it is to her attack.

To her own character ſhe cannot be inſenſible; however ſtudious ſhe may be, to avoid the diſplay or even a glimpſe of its blemiſhes. And when accidentally contraſted with benignity or piety (for ſhe muſt ſometimes fall in with the good and the pious) ſhe can hardly eſcape, without a tranſitory conſciouſneſs, at leaſt, of ſome unamiable qualities, very oppoſite in their appearance and very different in their effect.

Hence

Hence her envy adds fuel to her malevolence: and hints, and whiſperings, and ſneering, and ſurmiſes, with all the inſtruments of ſlander, co-operate to the degradation of merit. To ſtrip, therefore, the worthy of their apparent excellence, and thus bring them nearer to the ſtandard of her own morality, is her general incentive to detraction.

This tendency to propagate reports injurious to our neighbour, is too viſible in every ſituation. But there is a vice of the tongue among women of condition, too glaring to paſs unnoticed; and which, we hope, for the ſake of the common morals, will be long confined to the daughters of luxurious affluence.

To deſcant, even in promiſcuous company, on ſubjects that ſpread bluſhes over the modeſt cheek, ſeems to be peculiarly faſhionable among thoſe, who are born to more brilliant fortunes; and who boaſt, according to their own notions of good breeding, a ſuperior education to the reſt of their ſex.

That the reſtraints of modeſty ſhould be relaxed at a period, when the manners are ſaid to have received their higheſt poliſh, is a moſt ſingular circumſtance, which hardly any thing ſhort of experience could induce one to credit. And that this

this ſhameful deficience in common delicacy ſhould be moſt conſpicuous in the fineſt-faſhioned, and (taking them at their own eſtimation) the very beſt-mannered of the ſofter ſex, appears ſtill more ſtartling and improbable. Yet it is a fact too obvious to be diſputed. Enervated and at the ſame time emboldened on the couch of indulgence and pomp, the negligent fair-one diſmiſſes the embarraſſing rules preſcribed by vulgar decorum, affects a ſuperiority to antiquated prejudices, and communicates all that pampers appetite, and ſtirs the paſſions, with a volubility of language, and an effrontery of countenance, which humbler domeſticated females have neither heard nor ſeen, nor can poſſibly conceive. Flattered by a gay licentious circle, ſhe enjoys a triumph which, at a cooler moment, her own feeble reaſon muſt abſolutely condemn; and expoſes, perhaps, her weakneſſes to to the eye of the ſeducer, through the petulance of incontinent vanity, the redundancy of reſtleſs ſpirits, and the warmth of an ungovernable fancy.

Compoſed of ſuch flimſy and corrupt materials, the converſation of the more elevated female, is yet frequently imitated by her inferiors, as the model of eaſe and gracefulneſs. The peruſal of

novels

novels may have given her, indeed, a pert promptneſs in converſing; but flowing elegance is only the reſult of taſte: and taſte very rarely exiſts amid the levity and viciouſneſs of frivolous ſchemes and depraved appetites.

But we muſt not object either to her dreſs or to her converſation, as the only means, by which ſhe diſſipates her time, and abuſes the bleſſings of ſociety.

To gaming, and to various ſpecies of extravagant amuſement, the greater part of her hours are ſtudiouſly devoted. If ſhe be not ſmitten with the love of play, too deep to admit of airy volatility, behold her fluttering about from one place of diverſion to another; capricious in her wanderings as the butterfly, and fleeting in her colors, as the chameleon. Attached to more ſerious diſſipation, ſhe conſumes her days and nights, amid the reſtleſſneſs of gambling; and, with ſpirits agitated by alternate fortune, experiences depreſſions and triumphs both equally irrational—which excite ridicule in the ſpectator, and malevolence in the rival. She ſinks into dejections which no one hath yet commiſerated, and exults over con-

queſts in which no reaſonable being can rejoice—the former mixed with anger and deſperation—the latter, ſoon inadequate to the cravings of inſatiable cupidity.

The gayer modes of waſting life may come in to diſengage her mind from the ſolicitudes of gaming. But as that mind is weak and unformed, 'tis of little importance to her happineſs that ſhe hath ſhifted the ſcene. Her pleaſures (for ſuch the world entitles them) alike terminate in vice and folly; whether ſhe pines through diſappointed avarice, or languiſhes with irregular deſire; whether her eyes glance envy at the midnight game, or ſparkle to the bluſh of concupiſcence, amidſt revelry, and dancing.

This, then, is the outline of many a female character in high life.

And women, of an inferior order, and in more retired ſituations, are addicted, I much ſuſpect, to ſimilar converſation and ſimilar purſuits.

Diſſipation hath not reſtrained her empire to the metropolis. Every village is become tributary to her ſceptre. In places remote from the ſeat of faſhion (where dreſs degenerates into finery and oſtentation) the intercourſe ſhe hath

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed among females is more frequently ſupported by the freedoms of the tongue, as it is leſs ſhackled by ceremonious attentions. It is there, the tranſactions of every family are the amuſing topics of diſcuſſion; while the moſt private receſſes are detected, and the moſt trivial contingencies reported with avidity. Hence the longings of curioſity, and the quickneſs of erring apprehenſion. Hence the ſpirit of cenſoriouſneſs, that ſpreads from houſe to houſe on every novel occaſion; and ſeems, as ſoon as generated, to pervade the whole neighbourhood, with the velocity of an electric fluid.

Nor are theſe obſcurer ſocieties exempt from other modiſh exceſſes; which, through a miſerable affectation of enjoying the pleaſures and luxuries of the great, are rapidly introduced into every village, and obſerved as laws by the convivial and the gay. Others, in the mean time, who perceive the evil tendency of ſuch injunctions, and refuſe to be influenced by the general practice, are often excluded from the converſation of no contemptible acquaintance, and inevitably cenſured with all the aſperity of ſatire. She, who hath ſenſe and virtue enough to avoid the levities of the morning, which

is uſually waſted in "*wandering from houſe to houſe*," and to abſtain from the continual repetitions of thoſe idle entertainments that mark the declining day, and occupy the night, is commonly pointed out and ridiculed, as ſelf-opinionated, inconverſible, and auſtere. Thus are many led, by a fatal neceſſity, into modes of diſſipating time and fortune which they totally diſapprove. A dread of cenſure too frequently operates on the timid and irreſolute, to the relaxation of morality and the ſubverſion of happineſs. And there is an amiable flexibility in the female mind, which cannot always reſiſt the ſolicitations of the importunate; together with a diſpoſition to the ſocial pleaſures, which trembles at the odious attributes of ſullen diſſatisfaction or ſolitary pride.

But let her, who hath an inclination to decorum and ſobriety, look around her, with an eye of reflexion, on the pretended enjoyments of the diſſipated female: let her trace licentious pleaſure to the heart; and ſhe will diſcover its vanity, its folly and its guilt.

Nor can ſhe help determining, with ardent reſolution, to tread the paths of regularity and virtue.

That

That conſequences the moſt fatal are connected with the conduct I am cenſuring, muſt be inſtantly obvious even to the votaries of diſſipation; though 'tis a truth they may not readily allow.

Beſide the immediate evils that accompany the diſſipated female, we may ſee ruin ſpreading every where around her; whether we conſider her, as owing determinate duties to herſelf, to her fellow-creatures, or to her God.

If we obſerve her tainted by the roving malady we have been deſcribing, immediately on her entrance into the world of faſhion, we cannot but view her with the moſt diſtreſsful emotions; while a train of miſchiefs, to herſelf inviſible, have marked her already for their own.

Nurtured amidſt indolence, and ſoothed, perhaps, by vanity, ſhe mixes in the tumult of life, with deſires afloat for pleaſure—with paſſions, never ſubject to reſtraint. Inexperienced, ſhe hath no adviſer—ignorant, ſhe hath no guide—expoſed to danger, ſhe hath no protector. Her parents, poſſeſſing neither fondneſs nor a ſenſe of duty, have long perhaps purſued the faſhionable track, with no regard to her ſentiments or conduct. They have accuſtomed her to every evil way; and, with

their

their fatal example before her eyes, they preſent her to the world a more pitiable object, than the young unfriended orphan.

Though her caſe be not thus deſperate, ſhe hath yet every evil to apprehend, whilſt permitted to join the modiſh circle, with too eaſy a conformity to the reigning manners. For the duties which ſhe owes herſelf—if either her body or her mind be worth her cultivation or care; if ſhe pay any deference to the opinion of the wiſe, and think her general character deſerves attention; ſhe may poſſibly be awakened to ſome apprehenſion of danger in the pleaſures to which ſhe hath formed an early, though not a rooted attachment.

It is natural to imagine, that while yet ſhe is young, ſhe may wiſh to preſerve the luſtre and the bloom of youth. Nor can health be a trivial object in her eyes, as long as it heightens the attractions of beauty. She would, therefore, regret the loſs of health, in proportion as ſhe values the the poſſeſſion of it. And yet ſhe abſurdly ſports with a bleſſing, which, even in her own idea, is neceſſary to her happineſs. The reduction or dilatation of her figure according to the ſhapes that wild caprice hath moulded—the load of ornament

by

by which ſhe is continually incumbered—the varniſh, that hides, perhaps, bluſhes too coarſe for the languid delicacy of refinement—the agitation of the ſpirits, amidſt inceſſant viſiting—the ſenſualities of the epicure, and the watchings of irregular hours—all theſe conſpire to enfeeble her frame, and haſten the wrinkles of a premature old age. Even then, indeed, ſhe may wear, awhile, the ſemblance of her charms, by the continuance of thoſe artifices that deſtroyed what were really ſuch. But though elaborate colouring may protract the deluſions of beauty, it will inſenſibly precipitate her ruin.

And, when the deception is over, whither can ſhe retreat for ſhelter? The admiration ſhe once inſpired is now converted into antipathy. Every pleaſure ſhe had enjoyed, hath loſt its flavor. Even the more ſerious modes of diſſipation can engage no longer her exhauſted deſires.

But hath ſhe no ſtores of private ſatisfaction to which ſhe may have recourſe?—The enjoyments of the mind are independent; unconnected with external circumſtance. Alas! her mental diſorder was prior to her bodily. Her mind hath been long diſeaſed and drooping; at firſt a mere vacuity, but

now

now filled with every futile, every vicious idea: 'tis enfeebled through a long ſuſpenſion of the rational faculty—contaminated by the groſſeſt impurities.

In the calmneſs of ſolitary thought, ſhe cannot repoſe; for all within is tumult! The milder affections ſhe cannot addreſs for ſuccour; they have ſcarce exiſted in her heart, ſince the harmleſs days of childhood. She hath no reliſh for gentleneſs or innocence. Early taught to deſpiſe meekneſs as inſipid, and humility as mean, ſhe is indeed forlorn, if gaety or diſtinction can no more elevate her ſpirits, or gratify her pride. To every quarter, therefore, ſhe looks in vain for peace; but herſelf ſhe cannot ſhun. Had ſhe the wings of a dove, ſhe would vainly endeavour to "fly away and be "at reſt."

In the mean time, her reputation hath been gradually declining—regretted by the ſerious, and inſulted by the gay. Having never avoided the appearance of evil, ſhe had expoſed herſelf to cenſures which could have no effect amid the levities of intoxicating pleaſure; and ſhe had laid herſelf open to ſnares which, concurring with her inclications, no virtuous principle would have enabled her to reſiſt. If, thus acceſſible to every tempter, ſhe

ſhe yet eſcaped ſeduction, it was circumſtance that ſaved her—'twas ſome fortuitous concurrence of events: it was pride; it was a dread of degradation; it was any thing but virtue.

Should a character, like this, diſgrace the marriage-ſtate, we can hardly imagine her connected with a man of principle or prudence.

Few men, indeed, though diſſolute as herſelf, regard lightly the domeſtic endearments. Notwithſtanding their youthful days have been marked by intemperance or folly, they look forward, (ſince they have generally a regard for matrimony, whatever they may profeſs) to the ſtill pleaſures of conjugal affection. No huſband, in her ſociety, can expect any rational enjoyment. The feaſt of reaſon is not for characters, who know no higher luxury than mere animal indulgence. To repreſent her as performing thoſe duties of a wife, which her diſſipated habits muſt lead her to violate in every inſtance, would be abſurd and prepoſterous. Her indifference to her huſband's real intereſts—her inattention to his wiſhes—her oppoſition to every laudable meaſure that might interrupt extravagance—her contempt of œcono-

mical principles—her averſion, in ſhort, from every thing that may wear the appearance of duty, muſt extinguiſh each ſpark of connubial ſatisfaction, and finally involve the moſt affluent in difficulties and diſtreſs.

If ſhe bear children, ſhe will look on them as ſo many incumbrances, or clogs on her enjoyment; and, conſequently, neglect their education. To conſult their real advantage, ſhe is totally unqualified; though, for exterior accompliſhments, ſhe may poſſibly provide her daughters with domeſtic inſtructors; or place them in ſome public ſeminary, where affectation, and vanity, and vice are early nurſed and cheriſhed. In ſhort, as her offſpring may probably reſemble herſelf, to bear children will be to injure ſociety, by the multiplication of her own image into greater varieties of evil.

The corruption of her ſervants, abandoned to their own inclinations and purſuits, will be a ſure prelude to the more general, though leſs viſible influence of her contagious example. 'Tis not in her own houſe only, that the unprincipled female adminiſters the poiſon. Every woman of faſhion hath a portentous influence on the public manners.

And

And its extent is, indeed, truly alarming, when even the miniſters of our holy religion have unbluſhingly ſacrificed the decorum of order, and the appearances of decency, to a falſe and a frivolous politeneſs.

But, ſurely, we cannot long contemplate her character as unfiniſhed by the touch of looſer gallantries, at a ſeaſon where matrimonial fidelity is ſo generally diſcountenanced and degraded. The violation of the marriage-bed is ſo familiar in the faſhionable world, that the moſt notorious proſtitution hath been charitably termed "innocent "intrigue;" and all its horrors ſoothed away by the illuſion of a few ſoft epithets. An adulterous connexion, therefore, too commonly fills up the meaſure of her ſins, and cloſes the diſſipations of the miſerable wanderer. It is this completes the ſcene of depravity, and hurries her to infamy and deſtruction.

To be divorced from the conjugal and maternal ſcene, where ſhe never experienced the ſlighteſt ſatisfaction, can be no mortification to her inſenſible heart.

But, if we keep her ſtill before our eyes, we ſhall quickly ſee her wrinkled by every ſpecies of diſ-

treſs—and grown gray in laſciviouſneſs, with the inclination to vice without the power of ſinning.

In this diſconſolate ſituation, ſhe may poſſibly endeavour to turn her thoughts to repentance. But, alas! it is too late: ſhe had ſo long loved the world, that ſhe could not diſengage herſelf from it, while any ſparks of paſſion remained to be kindled into a flame. Every incentive is now extinguiſhed. The ties of the world are broken; becauſe ſhe is become incapable of any attachment. How, in this condition, can ſhe think of religion? Through her whole life, ſhe hath violated every duty towards man. Of God ſhe hath never thought—or, if ſhe have, ſhe hath ſaid in her heart, "that there was "no God." She may utter, perhaps, at this juncture, a few faint ſupplications—"but words with-"out thoughts never to Heaven go."

Conſcious of having waſted all her time in folly and ſin, and trembling over the grave where her body ſhall ſhortly be the prey of reptiles—conſcious of having provoked the wrath of him to whom ſhe muſt account for all her words and actions, how can ſhe ſupport the thoughts of judgment? She now, for the firſt time, views her ſoul, the exiſtence of which ſhe ſcarce had felt before, contaminated—

taminated—loathſome, through a maſs of ſin, yet deſtined to appear before God, in the ſight of men and angels! And death is faſt approaching. Let us draw a veil over its agonies—they are too dreadful for contemplation!

Such, ye fair ones, is the frequent fate of the diſſolute among you! To expoſtulate with you, after what I have repreſented, would be uſeleſs repetition. I can ſuggeſt no ſtronger argument, to awaken your reflexions. I can delineate no deſcriptions more ſtriking. I have already raiſed the bluſh on your cheeks—Would it were the bluſh of ingenuouſneſs! But, 'tis a ſuffuſion, I fear, you would wiſh to conceal from every eye. Yet, if you are aſhamed of your conduct, ſmother not the ſentiments that may riſe in your boſoms; this moment is the very criſis of reformation—you will never find a more convenient ſeaſon!

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XIX.

I. TIMOTHY v. 14.

I will, therefore, that the younger women marry—bear children—guide the houſe—give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully.

AFTER having opened to you the diſagreeable proſpect of females wandering through all the haunts of diſſipation; I ſhall have more pleaſure in the diſplay of them, as adorning their proper ſphere, while occupied by a becoming attention to the domeſtic duties.

THE apoſtle hath ſketched out to you the principal parts of female duty, in thoſe retired ſituations which peculiarly correſpond with the character of woman.

The firſt point on which he inſiſts, is the expediency of matrimony. "*I will* (ſays he) *that*

"*the*

"*the younger women marry.*" Though in one of his epiſtles to the Corinthians, St. Paul appears to recommend virginity, yet it was only in ſubſervience to temporary circumſtances. The ſtate of the Chriſtian Church was too unſettled to admit the various cares, by which married perſons muſt be neceſſarily engaged. But, in general, the connexion of the ſexes, whilſt it is urged by nature, is ſanctioned by religion.

The appetites and paſſions which nature hath implanted in us, were intended for our good. They were not to be repelled, but turned into their proper channels. The paſſion of love requires indulgence: and the laws both of God and man have pointed out to us the means, by which it may be indulged with innocence. There is nothing which ſo highly conduces to the happineſs of life, as virtuous love. And early attachments preclude much moral evil. They are dictated by ſimple nature; and commonly attended with ſatisfaction, as laſting as it is pure. The youthful mind, in which no particular object hath been able to raiſe the emotions of love, is not unfrequently tortured by irregular paſſions and deſires. A virtuous attachment, early formed, is, therefore, a

circumſtance

circumſtance devoutly wiſhed by all who value that moral felicity which is moſt conſiſtent with nature; though it may not always agree with the frigid maxims of the world.

That women, however, ought ſedulouſly to guard againſt attachments, which are not immediately and unequivocally warranted by reciprocal feelings, is, doubtleſs, to be recommended on the grounds of diſcretion; ſince their natural delicacy and timidity prevent the firſt diſcovery of their ſentiments. In ſome caſes, indeed, ſuch a diſcovery, neither oppoſed by nature or reaſon, would only militate againſt that falſe refinement of opinion, which hath always an influence on ſocieties highly poliſhed.

To render herſelf worthy a good huſband, will be the aim of every ſenſible and well-diſpoſed female.

With this view ſhe will endeavour to qualify herſelf for the performance of the conjugal duties.

If we conſider her, as placed above the inferior ranks of life, we ſhall ſee her unweariedly attentive to her underſtanding and her heart; aware, that, without the cultivation of theſe, ſhe can never become a rational or an amiable companion.

Whatever

Whatever may be the attractions of her perſon or her fortune, her mental qualities and accompliſhments cannot eſcape the eye of the diſcerning. Senſibility gives expreſſion to a face which, otherwiſe, would have little to recommend it: and beauty borrows its ſweeteſt glow from the tender animations of benevolence. The luſtre of good ſenſe and virtue hath a more permanent effect than the glare of external circumſtance: nor will that fortune, though inconſiderable, be deſpiſed, the poſſeſſor of which hath diſtinguiſhed herſelf by prudence to prevent its diminution, and contentment to ſupply its deficiencies. She only, who hath an improved mind, can be aſſured of her power to confer happineſs on the conjugal union.

Thus prepared, ſhe will enter into the married ſtate, with every encouraging omen of felicity.

If the temper of her huſband be congenial with her own; if the general tenor of his ſentiments correſpond with her's; and if he have ſufficient philoſophy to overlook thoſe trifling incidents, which are commonly the ſubject of domeſtic diſputes, ſhe will have little occaſion for the exerciſe of her diſcretion, in her endeavors to conſult his eaſe and welfare. But, granting ſhe may have

connected herſelf with a perſon well deſerving her regard in point both of diſpoſition and underſtanding, ſhe is not to expect from him that continual ſelf-command, which, as it is only to be ſuſtained by the pureſt reaſon, can hardly continue without ſome little interruptions, amidſt a variety of unavoidable vexations—though ſingly trivial, yet in the aggregate important. If elevated minds are obliged, as they often are, to ſtoop to little things, they muſt conſequently be affected by little miſadventures or miſcarriages. It is the province of the wife to draw off the attention of her huſband from every untoward circumſtance in a family, by her own affectionate aſſiduities—to alleviate or do away every thing diſagreeable that may be traced to her own negligence or default, by an unreſerved declaration of the cauſe—not to extenuate her failings, when ſhe is wrong, nor vindicate herſelf with violence when ſhe was right; and to concede, on every ſubject of diſagreement, rather more than might be reaſonably expected, inſtead of giving up with aukwardneſs and ill-grace, what ſhe is no longer able to maintain.

To avoid all jarrings (eſpecially with thoſe who love) is not eaſily practicable. They, only, who

live with a perfect indifference to each other, are abſolutely free from altercation.

But a good wife is yielding and ſubmiſſive both in her words and actions. Though ſhe hath opinions of her own, ſhe never oppoſes them to her huſband's, but with meekneſs and diffidence—with a readineſs to abandon them on conviction, or to withdraw them if not willingly allowed; and with an unaffected acknowledgment of his general ſuperiority. The idea of this ſuperiority, which, perhaps, her firſt partial fondneſs had exalted beyond human perfection, it is her conſtant aim to cheriſh: and, magnifying his good qualities in proportion as ſhe overlooks his foibles, ſhe accuſtoms herſelf to contemplate his general conduct, with a ſatisfaction that borrows its higheſt flavor from his imaginary attributes. This deluſion, if it be not too romantic, is of the laſt importance in preſerving conjugal harmony. As long as ſhe thinks highly of her huſband, ſhe will love him and obey him.

Nor will ſhe be negligent in ſupporting the favourable opinion her huſband may have formed of her, by an attempt to retain, perhaps, that graceful manner, and to improve thoſe agreeable qualities,

which might at firſt have conciliated his attention, or rivetted his heart. There are many pleaſing trifles, which have ſo vaſt an effect in keeping alive the fondneſs of a huſband, that to diſmiſs them would be to run the riſque of diſſipating his partiality; though it might not endanger his eſteem. All the little delicacies are to be inviolably preſerved; and all the leſſer virtues and graces to be ſedulouſly cultivated. In the preſervation of theſe, her good ſenſe and her good inclinations will greatly aſſiſt her: and theſe (as far as ſubordinate matters can avail) will prolong the duration of conjugal affection.

But, after all, 'tis in religion only, to enſure the ſtability of love and happineſs. And religion can do this, on every emergence. The world might tempt her, by various ways, to violate her duties to her huſband, notwithſtanding the general rectitude of her intention; were ſhe only to confide in an underſtanding and a temper, which (though naturally good and amiable) were yet uninfluenced by religion. To communicate her religious ſentiments to her huſband—to inſpire him with that ſpirit of piety ſo congenial with the female mind; and to look up to him for better information on the doctrinal points they might happen to diſcuſs;

ſuch is the employment which would gradually rectify her opinions, ſweeten her diſpoſition, and meliorate her conduct.

And hence only can ſhe render herſelf capable of inſtructing her offspring.

For, as ſhe is to expect children, ſhe ought neceſſarily to prepare herſelf for their education.

Let us now, therefore, conſider her in a new light—"I will (ſaith the apoſtle in the text) that "the younger women—bear children."

The female, who follows the dictates of nature and reaſon, may find enough to fill up her time, without having recourſe to the various methods which faſhion hath invented. Many of theſe methods, indeed, are ſo buſtling and tumultuous, that they often materially injure the child which is yet in its mother's womb—if they do not occaſion its death, or the death of the parent. The quiet undiſſipated life, only, agrees with her, who would bring her offspring maturely born and unblemiſhed into the world. Ere ſhe is a mother, therefore, her duty commences to her child. And 'tis a duty, though little regarded, of no ſmall moment. From a thoughtleſs or a wilful violation of it, have thouſands been deſtroyed.

When

When the little infant is uſhered to the light, her own inſtinct (if undepraved) will direct her to conſult its preſervation, by every ſalutary care. To ſuckle it with the milk of her own boſom, will be an obvious and a delightful taſk: nor will ſhe conceive it poſſible ſo far to reſiſt the natural impulſe of maternal tenderneſs, as to baniſh her babe from the breaſts which are its own, into the arms of a ſtranger who is totally unintereſted in its fate. The delight ſhe enjoys in nouriſhing her helpleſs offspring, is of the moſt exquiſite kind. In common with all the animals of the brute creation, ſhe perceives a pleaſure in the very act of ſuckling—abſtractedly from mental feelings or reflexion—which (by the way) may be an argument in favor of it, ſufficient to recommend the experiment to thoſe voluptuous females who have ſeldom exerciſed either their ſenſibility or their reaſon. But the mother, who cheriſhes in her boſom a babe endeared to her by manifold ſufferings for its ſake—who feels herſelf ſuſtaining, by the milk of her own body, a human creature juſt ſeparated from herſelf, yet almoſt as dependent on her for ſupport as before its ſeparation, muſt experience a ſatisfaction far preferable to every diſſipated or licentious enjoyment,

ment. To ſuckle her own child is ſo plain and ſelf-evident a duty, that the mother who reflects at all, can have little reliſh for pleaſure, amidſt the faſhionable allotments of that time which ought to have been uninterruptedly devoted to her off-ſpring. She, who hath been cruel enough to make an alien of her child, by removing it, as ſoon as born, at a diſtance from her family, hath effectually blunted the acuteneſs of thoſe feelings which were intended to intereſt the parent in her children's education. There are ſome who, having permitted one child to imbibe the milk of a ſtranger at the ſame time that they have nouriſhed another with their own, have experienced a very perceptible preference for the latter, in point of natural affection. But, while the mother's love for her extruded little one is decreaſing, or rather decaying in the very bud, it is of moment to conſider, that he is perhaps imbibing ſo deeply the conſtitutional ill-qualities of his ſuppoſititious nurſe, as to contaminate both his body and his mind with the principles of pollution. The good mother, then, will think it one of her firſt duties towards her children, to feed them with her own milk.

To begin thus aright, will be a ſure promiſe of her future attention to their welfare. From infancy to youth, ſhe will watch over them with the fondeſt regard—obſerve even their ſlighteſt propenſity to what is wrong, and correct it by eaſy remedies — practiſe every rational method of preſerving their health and vigor; and train them up in the paths of righteouſneſs. From the contagious converſation of ſervants, ſhe will ſedulouſly guard them; nor intruſt them, without frequent inſpection, even to the management of their immediate attendants. She will, herſelf, inſtruct them in the elements of language and religion; nor give up her boys into their father's hands, 'till ſhe can reſign them, flouriſhing like the roſe-bud, and inviting the warmth of a ſuperior cultivation to open them into a beautiful maturity. Her girls ſhe will long guide, with unremitting diligence and circumſpection. Awakened to the peculiar niceties of a female education, ſhe will tremulouſly ſteer between the oppoſite points, in which too much attention hath been paid, either to literary qualifications, or to exterior and domeſtic accompliſhments. As her principal object will be the improvement of the heart, ſhe will

obſerve

obſerve the greateſt caution in recommending to her daughters thoſe writings which inform the head or amuſe the imagination, without either a moral or religious tendency. To fill the female mind with the ſtores of ſcience, may be to ſupply it with the moſt valuable materials—to arm it againſt the dangers of affluence and grandeur, and to furniſh it with reſources againſt the hour of adverſity. But where learning hath once produced theſe beneficial effects in its female votaries, it hath a thouſand times proved the bane to their happineſs, and the happineſs of all whom they have been able to influence; inſpiring them with an over-weening pride, and a contempt for the humbler offices of domeſtic life. Nor is it always ſafe to introduce them to the friendſhip of the muſes. The fervor of poetry hath often relaxed the ties of prudence. But the regions of the noveliſt, to which common life is all dulneſs and inſipidity, are to be kept at an immeaſurable diſtance from the female eye. The ſenſible mother will be aware, that even the beſt novels are to the young heart deluſive and dangerous. Even the beſt exhibit pictures of vice: but, to be acquainted with vice, in order to avoid it, is not

neceſſary for a woman. If ſhe confine herſelf to the retreats for which nature intended her, ſhe will be little expoſed to temptation. Her's is the ſilent and the ſequeſtered path. What ſhe ought never to ſee, ſhe need not know: her ignorance of vice is her greateſt ſecurity.

Yet, there are various productions highly captivating to the young, which the good parent will not heſitate to preſent to her daughters. To impreſs, however, their minds with the words of ſacred truth, will be her firſt and favourite ſtudy. Inſtead of having injudiciouſly broken the ſcriptures into familiar leſſons, and proſtituted them to the purpoſes of elementary inſtruction, ſhe hath wiſely reſerved them for the edification of leſs puerile years. It is now that ſhe initiates her pupils into the ſacred page with a gradual ſolemnity; leads them from plainer paſſages to ſuch as are leſs perſpicuous; from hiſtorical narration to prophetical deſcription; and ſelects, for their more frequent peruſal, the beautiful morality of the Goſpel.

Hence they can beſt derive their ſweeteſt attributes—humility, gentleneſs, and modeſty.

In the mean time, there are inferior virtues and qualifications, which their faithful preceptreſs will deem

deem worthy their regard. To the graces ſhe will direct their ſecondary care. To ſet off their charms by the help of exterior decoration and addreſs, is not only natural but laudable, provided it be done with ſimplicity and delicacy. 'Tis only the glare of oſtentation which we cenſure—the harlotry of artificial bluſhes. The faireſt forms in nature ought ſurely to have every honeſt advantage: but let them be adorned with dignity and eaſe. Let not finery be miſtaken for elegance; or formality for politeneſs. The diſcerning mother will diſcriminate between the uſe and abuſe of the exterior accompliſhments—will ſee the propriety with which a moderate attention to them is impoſed, and yet perceive an inexcuſable vanity and irrationality in devoting to them the beſt portion of our time. Had the life of woman been chiefly deſigned for the embelliſhment of ſociety, the ſhowy outſide had been well adapted to it. But the caſe is far otherwiſe. The calls of a family are too ſerious to be poſtponed for trifles; too preſſing to be deferred from day to day; and too various not to demand the moſt unwearied activity. For this great variety of cares, which requires no depth of thought, the female

mind ſeems moſt happily formed. More lively than penetrating, and more rapid than contemplative, it can eaſily turn from moral and religious ſtudies and occupations to the elegant or ornamental accompliſhments, and from the ornamental accompliſhments to the management of a family; and, if not immoderately occupied by either, can attend to all with equal felicity.

To transfer to her daughters this happy verſatility, will now become the mother's prime ambition. Her daughters have been educated from their tendereſt years, under her own eye. They have been fed with her own milk; inſpired with her own piety; enlightened by her own underſtanding. They are now to behold her, with a more lively intereſt, among her companions and in her family. They are to imitate her manners: they are to tranſcribe her œconomy. Unexpoſed to the corrupting influence of a public ſeminary, where the firſt ardors of paſſion are fanned by communicated ſympathy—where confinement generates artifice, and where the leſſons of ignorant and conceited teachers produce levity, frivoloufneſs, and diſſipation; it is their happier fortune to have every licentious emotion precluded by the

delicacy

delicacy that accompanies chaſtized affection, to nouriſh that open ingenuouſneſs peculiar to youth, and to learn, under the eye of parental vigilance, what is eſtimable, and uſeful, and rational. Inſtead of the conſtrained geſtures of artificial behavior, they catch the living manners amid the friendly as well as poliſhed circle; and are inſenſibly habituated to gracefulneſs and eaſe. Beneath the parent's roof, they acquire, by imperceptible imitation, all that is externally as well as intrinſically elegant. Should retirement, perhaps urged by neceſſity, have cut off the opportunities of ſuch imitation, the mother may heſitate a moment in determining, whether ſhe ſhall place her daughters at a public ſchool with a view to the graces; or keep them at home with a manifeſt riſque of their being awkward for want of ſociety, and baſhful for want of expoſure. But ſhe would do well to reflect, that, in the former caſe, they may poſſibly ſacrifice to what is of little worth, the moſt valuable attainments—that, for a pleaſing exterior, which without ſomething ſolid within is often deluſive and dangerous, they may give up all ſhe hath taught them from their infancy—that they may, probably, return to her with notions above

their

their ſphere in life; with cold-hearted vanity, inſtead of amiable ſenſibility; with opinionative forwardneſs, inſtead of retiring diffidence; and, in ſhort, with a ſupercilious contempt for their poor domeſticated parents. That theſe are no fanciful ſuppoſitions, the experience of many hath miſerably and fatally evinced. And what are the ill effects of a private education?—What are the very worſt conſequences of this dreaded ſecluſion from the world? To affability and meekneſs and cultivated ſenſe, there may poſſibly adhere a few particles of ungracefulneſs timidity and ignorance as to ceremony or faſhion. But the politeneſs of the heart will amply ſupply theſe deficiencies. Good ſenſe and a ſweet diſpoſition, under the direction of a wiſe and affectionate inſtructreſs, will ſoon produce agreeable manners; though not poliſhed, perhaps, to the higheſt luſtre. In fact, as the females, nurtured under ſuch a mother, are to ſpend their lives in the receſſes of a private family (ſince the circumſtances of their friends will not entitle them to expect affluence or grandeur) the education they may receive in private, will be exactly ſuited to their condition.

It is under their own roof, that they will effectually turn their minds to prudence and frugality. Œconomical concerns muſt neceſſarily form a part of their ſtudy. It will now, therefore, be their intereſt and their pleaſure to obſerve every family-regulation, and aſſiſt their parent where their joint exertions may facilitate her undertakings or alleviate her anxieties. And that parent will, aſſuredly, afford them the very beſt opportunities for obſervation and for improvement; ſince the domeſtic character of a female includes œconomical as well as conjugal and parental cares. To be a good wife and a good mother, it is neceſſary to be a good œconomiſt.

The "younger women" are not only directed in the text "to marry and bear children," but, alſo, "to guide the houſe."

"*I will* (ſays the apoſtle) *that the younger women* "*guide the houſe.*"

Even for thoſe, who are placed in the very higheſt ranks of life, there are certain family-duties, which nothing but extreme levity or faſtidiouſneſs can abſolutely overlook. The immediate regulation of the houſe muſt be delegated to others; but ſuch a ſuperintending care

as

as may preclude extravagance and rioting, would by no means degrade the moſt opulent or diſtinguiſhed female. Yet a ſhameful conſumption of the good things which Providence hath ſhowered on its creatures, is too often obſervable in the houſes of the great. To make riches ſubſervient to licentiouſneſs, muſt argue an inſenſibility of the bleſſing; and ingratitude to Him who hath beſtowed it. But prodigality and all its train of vices will generally accompany wealth, unleſs they who poſſeſs it have the reſolution to prevent ſuperfluity and waſte, by their own undiſſipated conduct.

Nor are the rich unconcerned in other cares which, from prudential motives, are more preſſingly incumbent on their inferiors.

She, whom her circumſtances have neceſſarily habituated to parſimony, will not only ſhew thriftineſs in the general diſpoſition of her expences, but in the payment of her debts at ſtated times. Uninfluenced by the examples of the great, who often without honeſty affect generoſity, ſhe co-operates with her huſband in a regular attention to all the varieties of family-expenditure. To avoid the luxuries of the table is not enough. 'Tis this

this regular attention ſecures to her eaſe and comfort, in ſharing the bleſſings of Providence, and in relieving the burthens of the poor.

But œconomy includes other conſiderations, beſides thoſe of a pecuniary nature. The good houſewife will conſider neatneſs, which is one of the leſſer virtues too ſlightly noticed by the moraliſt, as an object of no trivial concern. She will delight to ſee it pervading her whole houſe. And her ſervants, viewing in her the model of neatneſs, will copy it, in their own perſons, and diſplay it in every thing which claims their care.

To complete all, ſhe will on no account relax her regard to ſettled hours, both as to family-repaſts and family-devotions; but, enforcing regularity, by her own uniform practice, diſtinguiſh herſelf by the earlineſs of her application to each domeſtic office. For much depends on this. To riſe early hath even a moral tendency. That it contributes both to affluence and to health, is ſo obvious as to have become proverbial. And that it renders the mind alert and vigorous and cheerful, will ſtrikingly appear, on contraſting the heavineſs of the ſlothful and enervated with the vivacity of the vigilant and induſtrious. If the firſt part of

the day be waſted in ſleep, what remains will hardly be recovered from diſſipation and diſorder. During the morning-ſlumbers of the miſtreſs, evil practices will gradually creep into the houſe, and gain ground among her ſervants, to the ruin of decorum, and the corruption of fidelity. Every domeſtic will begin to diſcover hardſhips in his own department, and complain of tedious taſks but ill proportioned to the little time in which they are expected to be performed. Half the buſineſs of the family will, conſequently, be ſlighted; and whatever is done, will be done imperfectly, amidſt indolence, diſcontent and perplexity. But all the affairs of a family will proceed in their proper direction, where the morning-hours are well employed.

And, what is of moſt importance, religion will have its due ſhare in the regular allotments of time. The neglect of family-prayer is much to be lamented in the preſent age. Even in families that are otherwiſe not improperly managed, we too frequently obſerve this unpardonable omiſſion. Yet a ſteady attention to ſo neceſſary a duty would, doubtleſs, be of uſe in regulating the paſſions and ſubduing every evil inclination.

To be gathered together into one aſſembly, after our labors whether bodily or mental are paſt, and

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to conclude the day by our united prayers to Him, who hath graciouſly ſuſtained us all without reſpect of perſons, muſt ſurely be delightful to the feeling heart, and not diſtaſteful to the leſs ingenuous.

To oblige, therefore, her domeſtics to attend family-prayers, as far as her authority may go, is the laſt beſt duty of her who "*guides the houſe.*"

In this manner, ſhe punctually performs the duties attendant on the ſeveral characters of the wife, the mother, and the œconomiſt.

If ſhe thus "*marry — bear children — and guide* "*the houſe,*" ſhe need not be afraid of violating the apoſtolical injunction that comes in, to cloſe all—for ſhe who diſcharges every domeſtic duty, with a proper ſenſe of its obligation, *can give no* juſt "*occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully.*"

'Tis true, ſhe ſtands related to many others beyond the walls of her own houſe—to her natural and to her acquired friends—to her acquaintance—to her fellow-creatures at large. Though her proper ſphere be at home, ſhe is not to convert that home into a cloyſter.

But the ſenſible and diſcreet woman will ſee the diſtinction between ſullen ſecluſion and a becoming retirement: and, though ſhe remit not her atten-

tion to her family around her, or ſuffer an hour to be loſt which ſhould be devoted to its intereſts, ſhe will, yet, remember her moſt diſtant connexions, and readily give them all the leiſure ſhe can command, amid the indiſpenſable obligations of weightier duties.

For her own ſake, indeed, ſhe will endeavour to ſupport an intercourſe with her friends, who will ſoothe her ſolicitudes, and divert her thoughts, which muſt, neceſſarily, require relaxation. And, to paſs from familiar friends into the circle of a well-choſen acquaintance, is not without its uſe. Nothing contributes more to the expanſion of the mind, or the pliability of the manners, than to converſe with various people, and to obſerve their differing ſentiments and characters. For this, however, ſhe will have little leiſure; and much leſs for public amuſements. But ſhe will always have leiſure for the calls of friendſhip. And her benevolence will be as extenſive as the world—her heart alive to the diſtreſſes of all! Though a friend engage her ſympathy, ſhe will not refuſe it to an enemy.

Amidſt theſe ſeveral offices, there ſtill remains a duty to be performed without the walls of her own

own houſe. To dedicate, at leaſt, her ſeventh day to the ſanctuary, is a duty ſhe owes both God and man. Her devotions, however fervent at the ſolitary moment, will be no acceptable offering, unleſs openly expreſt at the ſeaſon of public worſhip. Among other conſiderations, the circumſtance of example will ſtrongly urge her attendance on the church. And no trifling avocations will occaſion her abſence from it.

Theſe, then, are the outlines of a perfect female character — ſuch as the adverſary will have no reaſon to traduce. Yet, with all its untarniſhed whiteneſs, there are ſome who will endeavour to ſully it. As long as malice and envy exiſt in the world, there will be tongues to aſperſe the innocent. The female, however, who is engaged by her proper calling, will be neither "obvious nor "obtruſive," ſo as to attract the obſervation of the world. The reports, therefore, of the cenſorious will quickly die away; and new calumnies be leſs eagerly circulated, amidſt the pauſes of abortive detraction, and the languor of declining curioſity. Whatever, indeed, may be ſuggeſted to her diſadvantage, or may be the iſſue of ſuch ſuggeſtions, her conſciouſneſs that ſhe hath never given

given " *occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproach-* " *fully*," will ſupport her againſt all the malignity of evil minds or evil tongues.

At the cloſe of all, the queſtion will ariſe, " Who can find ſo virtuous a woman?"

If we look to the examples of females in general, we ſhall obſerve, that though they may " bear " children, and guide the houſe" with tolerable ſkill, they yet often give " *occaſion to the adverſary* " *to ſpeak reproachfully*;" whilſt they ſhew themſelves indifferent in reſpect to their general demeanor, and the opinions which the world may form of it. Inſenſible of their dignity, they negligently paſs through life; and, as long as they avoid actual ſin, diſregard the appearances of evil. The liberties in which married women too frequently indulge themſelves, as if they were licenſed by matrimony to throw off the natural delicacy of their ſex, were notorious in the apoſtle's days: in our own they are ſufficiently obſervable. In this country, the female is ſubjected to little reſtraint. It is left to her own ingenuouſneſs and reaſon, to ſet bounds to inclinations and paſſions which the laws would ineffectually circumſcribe.

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In this country, the effects of female conduct are moſt conſpicuouſly diſplayed. Here, therefore, 'tis for women to aſſert their genuine dignity, and afford us an opportunity of contemplating the luſtre and the influence of their characters; whilſt they perceive how much they owe themſelves, their connexions, their country, and their God. 'Tis in their power to concentrate within themſelves the moſt amiable virtues, and to embelliſh the fineſt forms by the rays of mental beauty. 'Tis in their power to create and to eſtabliſh the ſweeteſt and moſt rational enjoyments—to inſpire our pleaſures, and to diſſipate our pain. 'Tis in them, though retired from obſervation, to reform the public morals; whilſt their influence far extends beyond their happy retreats, and ſpreads into the general maſs with a quick, though ſilent progreſs. 'Tis in them to give religion its moſt engaging air, by the feelingneſs of their charity, the meekneſs of their piety, and the warmth of their devotion!

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XX.

EPHES. iv. 32.

Be ye kind, one to another—tender-hearted.

TO aſſert, with an air of triumph, that we are influenced by no partialities in judging of our neareſt or moſt valued friends, is a ſpecies of affectation too often obſervable in the world, though it has ſeldom been noticed by the moraliſt. This imaginary ſuperiority to what have been called the infirmities of human nature, is not the ſole enjoyment of the ſage who looks down ſuperciliouſly on mortals from the eminencies of his wiſdom. 'Tis the boaſt of a very different order of beings—the unphiloſophic progeny of faſhion. 'Tis the pride of every modiſh circle: and 'tis affected even by thoſe, who, the moment they are diveſted of their partial tenderneſs, are deprived

prived of half their charms. However the female ſex may plume themſelves on the acquiſition, ſuch apathy is revolting and diſgraceful.

That to ſurvey the character of our relatives in this cold and diſpaſſionate manner is contrary both to nature and the ſcriptures, may be proved by the cleareſt evidence.

THE chief pleaſures of life depend on a reciprocation of kindneſſes. The occurrences of every day wear an aſpect greatly modified by the ſociety in which they meet us. What might have been diſagreeable in ſolitude, hath no unpleaſing features amidſt ſocial communication. And what is but faintly enjoyed among thoſe for whom we have little regard, hath the power of affording us high ſatisfaction among our intimate aſſociates. Our joys are increaſed by friendly participation: our griefs are diminiſhed by ſympathy.

If ſuch be the advantages and comforts we derive from a familiar intercourſe with our friends, we muſt naturally love and value them, as the conſtant ſources of our happineſs. We become inſenſibly attached to the object that has occaſioned the removal of our pain, or the increaſe of our

pleaſure. And we cannot feel an attachment to an object, without being diſpoſed to view it in the moſt favourable light. This diſpoſition, however, exiſts before the judgment hath time to contemplate it with cool and deliberate attention. It is, therefore, a partial inclination. But, from the very conſtitution of our nature, it is unavoidable. He, who hath diſmiſſed it, muſt be either more or leſs than man.

Examine the connexions of the huſband and the wife. Is the power of penetrating into the foibles of each other to be wiſhed by the votaries of connubial felicity? Can ſuch a reciprocal inſight be reconcileable with the habits of love? The ſilent obſervation of faults will not continue long. What we obſerve in our familiar friends, we generally communicate with freedom. But ſuch communications cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt with conjugal affection: for they neceſſarily lead to reprehenſion. Frequent blame, however delicately adminiſtered, muſt diſcompoſe the temper. And the ruffled mind cannot always guard againſt thoſe paſſions, that are ſo often diſplayed in the virulence of retorted cenſure. But if no violent paſſion obtrude itſelf, a mutual diſeſteem muſt ſucceed to mutual reproof.

reproof. In either caſe, domeſtic comfort muſt be interrupted or diſſolved.

Nor can the "charities of father, ſon, and bro-"ther" be reconciled with that diſcriminating ſenſe of character which, in all circumſtances, affects impartiality. That parent can have little feeling who marks with nice preciſion every error or defect of his children, and who can ſee every virtue or talent in the ſame light as it may appear to an unprejudiced ſpectator. The man, whoſe heart is not depraved, muſt feel an intereſt in the welfare of his offspring. This intereſt will incline him to wiſh for thoſe good qualities in their minds, on which, he thinks, their welfare may depend. And what we wiſh, we often fancy. He will view, therefore, their merits and defects conſiderably heightened or diminiſhed through the medium of imagination. If he direct the education of his children, the conſciouſneſs of his good intentions and his diligence in the work of inſtruction, will lead him to imagine abilities which they do not poſſeſs; and to ſee them increaſing in learning and in virtue, with a progreſs to which the indifferent obſerver may be totally inſenſible. This is a ſpecies of deluſion, almoſt inſeparable from human nature.

A variety of circumſtances, indeed, will concur with his natural affection, to occaſion a preference of his own offspring to thoſe of others. In reſpect to the apparent faults of his children, the tender father will excuſe the more trivial offences, and often extenuate the leſs venial. He muſt, doubtleſs, detect errors: but if he treat them with the ſtrictneſs of a judge—if no parental fondneſs intervene to ſoften the rigor of his deciſions, he hath ſurely baniſhed from his boſom the moſt amiable feelings of humanity. And let him take care, that he overſtep not the limits of juſtice. Let him beware of tyranny. He, who hath diſcarded all partial attachment for a ſon, hath diſqualified himſelf for determining upon his conduct. An implacable ſeverity almoſt inevitably follows the extinction of a parent's tenderneſs. Though the indulgence of an Eli was highly culpable, we cannot but turn with antipathy from the rigid inflexibility of a Brutus.

The ſame diſpoſition to overlook the imperfections of his parents is natural to the child. Were he continually awake to every foible, or inadvertency, in the perſons whom it is his duty to obey, he would quickly loſe that reverence for

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their characters, which can alone enſure obedience. As ſoon as the child becomes ſenſible of his connexion with thoſe from whom he derived his being, and to whoſe affectionate care he owes all that is valuable in life, he muſt, aſſuredly, view in them his deareſt benefactors and friends. The emotions of gratitude, co-operating with his inſtinctive love, muſt occaſion ſuch a perſonal reſpect as to preclude the obſervation of their blemiſhes, or to palliate what he obſerves by fanciful excuſes. But the objects to which we have been familiarized, we ſeldom inveſtigate with deep reſearch. The ſon, habituated to the diſpoſition and ſentiments of the parent who hath formed his temper and regulated his manners, hath been ſo long accuſtomed to receive upon truſt both the leſſons and the character of his inſtructor, that he ſuſpects not either: or, if ſuſpicion ariſe, he poſtpones the taſk of examination to ſome future ſeaſon; becauſe, at any time, he may have an opportunity of examining. If there be a criſis when ſuch inveſtigation may take place, it is at the period when the ſon, having finiſhed the courſe of his education, may be obliged to reſide under his father's roof. Whilſt the former enjoys, perhaps,

haps, his faculties in all their ſtrength, with glowing affections and diſintereſted views, the latter, at the decline of life, hath his mental weakneſſes proportioned to his bodily infirmities. His benevolence is damped by frequent diſappointment, and the edge of his feelings worn away by a long colliſion with the world. Such characters are very improper companions. Their ſentiments and habits muſt neceſſarily diſagree. A thouſand little nameleſs incidents muſt give both uneaſineſs in the courſe of domeſtic familiarity. And, as the ΣΤΟΡΓΗ or natural love that once irreſiſtibly attached them, muſt have withdrawn its influence, they will mutually comment on each other's actions, with leſs inclination to pardon what is wrong.

To the young man, in particular, the veil that hid the father's failings, will be gradually lifted. Perhaps, elated on feeling the powers of his own intellect, he will be the leſs ready to make allowance for mental debility. Yet, after all, the frailties of his parent will ſcarcely appear to him, in their full diſcloſure. The images of early fondneſs, and the grateful remembrance of paternal anxieties, enlivening that eſteem which he can never loſe, will often interpoſe, amidſt his bittereſt reflexions

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on the peeviſhneſs or avarice of old age. Thus hath the Deity wiſely formed us with an almoſt inſuperable propenſity to paſs over the imbecilities and errors of thoſe with whom we are cloſely connected.

That children, alſo, poſſeſs the like partiality in their intercourſe with each other, would appear evident on the ſlighteſt obſervation. If they have been inſtructed in ſuch a manner as to prevent all rivalry or competition—if they have been educated in that harmony which is the neceſſary ſupport of the domeſtic virtues, it is probable that they will not only cultivate a partial regard for one another, during their earlier years, but extend the ſame pleaſing prepoſſeſſions to the remoteſt period of their lives.

In acquired friendſhips, there is a generous ardor, more likely to be carried beyond rational bounds than any feelings we can experience in favor of a relation. The latter muſt be always amiable. They are prejudices (if we may call them ſuch) connected with our duty: they reſide not in the vicious boſom. They cannot exiſt with immorality. In the mean time, our warmth of ſentiment may occaſion a romantic and irrational

predilection

predilection for the friend, whom congenial feelings have made our own. In delineating his character, all the glow of expreſſion appears faint: the moſt enthuſiaſtic praiſes are judged inadequate to his merits. To our elevated conceptions of him no blemiſhes appear! We conſtrue the ſlighteſt hint of an impropriety in his conduct into a treacherous calumny: and ſo fully do we poſſeſs ourſelves with a fancied opinion of his ſuperiority to the reſt of the world, that we often grow negligent of more eſtimable connexions, and feel little intereſt in what is tranſacting around us. When ſuch ſentiments become habitual, they muſt unavoidably trench upon the great duties of life. But theſe are natural feelings in exceſs. The inſipidity and indifference of our modiſh people are directly contrary to nature. A partial attachment to the friend of our choice (if it be duly moderated) is not only unexceptionable, but amiable. 'Tis not to be imagined that our intimacies can always ariſe from a frigid approbation of character; the reſult of ſlow and accurate inſpection. Friendſhips, in general, commence from incidental cauſes. We have been obliged, perhaps, by a perſon who was previouſly unknown to us. Our ſenſe of the obligation

obligation prediſpoſes us to look on him with favourable ſentiments. And our acquaintance is ripened into friendſhip by various undetailable circumſtances, that may raiſe his character in our eyes, though the world may ſee it through a different medium, and form of it a different judgment.

Nothing, therefore, can be more convincingly clear, than that ſuch partialities for our relations or acquired friends are abſolutely inſeparable from affection. We cannot retain the one without the other. On the death of friends, theſe partialities are obſervable in all, who have not extinguiſhed in their boſoms every ſpark of humanity. Whether, at the time we are ſurrounded by the bleſſings of friendſhip, we prize them as we ought, or not; the moment they are withdrawn from us we are duly affected with a ſenſe of their value, and thus deplore the loſs of what before, perhaps, we never rated as a part of our happineſs. The many hours of familiar converſation that had paſſed between us and the departed, are recollected with all the anguiſh of regret. The moſt trivial circumſtances, that were well-nigh faded from our minds, are now remembered afreſh: and they have charms that can alleviate our ſorrow, in proportion as imagi-

nation dilates their ſize or pictures their importance. Every little domeſtic occurrence ſerves to remind us of the many affectionate anxieties—of the joys and the griefs we had ſhared with the deceaſed. In the recollection of ſuch ſcenes and circumſtances, we neceſſarily ſwell the virtues and the good qualities of the perſon we had loſt, beyond their real and proper dimenſions, and give the oppoſite part of his character to oblivion. No one will cenſure this partiality. Whether "to "ſpeak no ill of the dead" be juſt or not, as a general maxim, 'tis undoubtedly ſo in reſpect to our friends that are no more. Yet our predilection for the living muſt be equally defenſible, ſince to them we are indebted for continued gratification.

After this view of affectionate partialities as founded in nature, let us curſorily examine a few paſſages in ſcripture; which will ſufficiently open to us the ſentiments of the inſpired writers on the ſubject.

The influence of the tender feelings in diſpoſing the wife and the huſband to overlook each other's foibles hath ſcarce been noticed by the ſacred authors;

authors; though they are conſidered as one fleſh throughout the ſcripture, and conſequently cannot be ſuppoſed to be continually awake to the faults of one another. The reverence which the wife is there commanded to pay her huſband, can hardly conſiſt with a keen inſight into his foibles. Nor is the huſband's love, which is to continue to the end of his days, to be kept alive without the intervention of prejudice. Even though the huſband were to poſſeſs an unbelieving wife, or the wife an unbelieving huſband, they are not to ſeparate without mutual conſent. For this we have the authority of St. Paul. The Chriſtian is to look on his Pagan conſort with an eye of partiality. He is even to live with her, and cheriſh her all his days, though ſhe remain a Pagan; at the ſame time that he ſcrupulouſly avoids all connexion with the Heathen around him.

The compaſſion which it is natural for a father to feel for his children in various circumſtances, and the allowances which he makes for their miſconduct are, not unfrequently, the ſubject of ſcriptural remark and illuſtration. The ſtrongeſt proof of obedience to the divine commands which Abraham could exhibit, was his readineſs to offer up

his ſon, "his only ſon Iſaac whom he loved, as a "burnt-ſacrifice unto the Lord." Though the attachment of a parent to one child in preference to the reſt, is, in moſt caſes, unwarrantable, and often attended with diſagreeable, ſometimes with fatal conſequences; yet we find Judah repreſenting the fondneſs of his father Jacob for the child of his old age, in terms that ſeem to excuſe the prepoſſeſſion. "We have a father, an old man; and "a child of his old age, a little one: and his "brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mo-"ther; and his father loveth him." It is in the moment of ingenuouſneſs that Judah thus pleads for his father. His ſenſibility was, here, arouſed. And his conſcience, if he had any remembrance of the paſt, could not have been aſleep. In his pleading for his father, he muſt have felt himſelf to be, as it were, his own accuſer. "For Iſrael "had loved Joſeph, alſo, more than all his chil-"dren, becauſe he was the ſon of his old age." "And when his brethren" (among whom was Judah) "ſaw that their father loved him more "than all his children, they hated him; and "could not ſpeak peaceably unto him."

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The prodigal ſon in the goſpel was, inſtantly, received with affection by his father, on his return from the " far country, where he had waſted all " his ſubſtance in riotous living." The tender parent fell on his ſon's neck, and kiſſed him, before he had time to acknowledge his error. And the paſſage illuſtrates, by the moſt ſtriking repreſentation, the infinite mercies of the Almighty, " who pities us, even as a father pitieth his own " children; ſince he knoweth whereof we are " made—he remembereth that we are but duſt."

Of fraternal partialities, there is no example in all hiſtory ſo remarkable as that of Joſeph. His preference to Benjamin above the reſt of his brethren, is related as a natural and neceſſary conſequence of nearer conſanguinity.

But " there is a friend, that ſticketh cloſer than " a brother." The ſacred hiſtorian ſeems to have been peculiarly animated, in relating the friendſhip of David and Jonathan. The attachment was formed, through a ſudden impulſe of ſympathy. " And it came to paſs, when he had made " an end of ſpeaking unto the king, that the ſoul " of Jonathan was knit unto the ſoul of David; " and Jonathan loved him as his own ſoul."

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Yet Jonathan, though his love was ſo rapidly inſpired, ſtood forth as the guardian-angel of his friend on every emergency—the mediator between Saul and David; expoſing his own life for David's ſake.

Our Saviour's affection for St. John is ſo ſtrikingly in point, that to glance at it is enough for our purpoſe. But had St. John any ſuperior virtues above the other diſciples? Was this the cauſe of our Saviour's preference? Or have we any reaſon to imagine, that Chriſt's predilection for Lazarus was merely in conſequence of his extraordinary merits?

To multiply examples on this topic would be perfectly unneceſſary. Nor does the ſubject require a farther diſcuſſion.

The concluſion muſt irreſiſtibly follow—that thoſe who have diveſted themſelves of ſuch feelings as may forerun or anticipate the judgment, have not only extinguiſhed half the pleaſures of life, but rendered themſelves incapable of performing its duties with activity and ſpirited perſeverance. The continual exerciſe of what they fancy to be reaſon, in abſolute oppoſition to their affections, muſt induce a cold unamiable temper, and finally

ſink

ſink into the torpor of inſenſibility. To dimiſs that, as an infirmity, which is a neceſſary part of human nature, is both arrogant and abſurd. Our imagination and our paſſions are as neceſſary to happineſs, as our reaſon. And though 'tis the part of reaſon to moderate their power, 'tis by no means her province to diſſipate the deluſive colors, with which imagination always inveſts the objects of paſſions. Can love, for inſtance, which is the paſſion we have been conſidering under its various forms, exiſt without the ſupport of fancy? To take away, by violence, the delightful errors that might have given riſe to its ſenſations, and may ſtill continue to enliven them, muſt be death itſelf to love. For what is it, in truth, but a partial attachment, whether it be the connubial flame—the parental, or the filial ΣΤΟΡΓΗ—the fraternal affection, or the ſympathy of friendſhip? At the ſame time (let me repeat) it is to be guided by reaſon, that ſhould never languiſh for want of exertion. And reaſon will not diſapprove the partial feelings, that may diſpoſe us to overlook or palliate the imbecilities of our friends, as long as reaſon remains unvitiated by ſtoical pride, or faſhionable indifference.

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I do not plead in favor of prejudices that may varniſh over vice, or give it the ſemblance of virtue. A bad character, whether our friend or our enemy, ſhould ever ſtrike us with abhorrence. I argue only againſt the total diſmiſſion of partialities, in oppoſition to the cold-hearted ſpeculations of the ſophiſt, and the conduct of the well-bred tribe, who, though they have little philoſophy about them, are actually reducing it into practice, as far as the circumſtance of their ſuppreſſing every virtuous emotion may be connected with its dogmas.

Philoſophers are few: but every ſtation is ſubjected, more or leſs, to the ſway of faſhion. Beneath her influence, life is become one formal ſyſtem. The domeſtic charities are no more. Every appearance of conjugal affection is inconſiſtent with good breeding. But, without the appearance, the reality muſt dwindle away. Love cannot brook diſſimulation. The faſhionable female diſdains the ſervile taſk of ſuckling her own offspring. From the moment of his birth, he is baniſhed from her preſence. No wonder, therefore, that ſhe feels not a maternal preference for her child! If her children receive inſtruction, 'tis in the modes of external behaviour, which allow

allow no ſigns or expreſſions of ſuperior regard for a relation or friend. An equal attention, unconnected with the heart, is inculcated to all around. And when this is once grown into a habit, 'tis impoſſible but that the natural feelings, which have long ineffectually ſtruggled under the ſevereſt oppreſſion, muſt languiſh and expire. In the polite circle, no emotion whatever muſt be diſcovered, on the moſt intereſting ſubjects: even for a female to ſhed tears, is deemed an unpardonable weakneſs. Such is the tyranny of faſhion; and thoſe who have not been able to vanquiſh nature, affect, however, the miſerable conqueſt! But alas! they do not conſider, that they have ſmothered every ſpark of ſocial happineſs.

In reſpect to religion, they have no notion of its duties or delights: And ſhould they ever have a glimpſe of them, they muſt inſtantly ſee themſelves incapable of performing the one, or reliſhing the other.

DISCOURSE XXI.

St. Matthew, x. 30.

The very hairs of your head are all numbered.

THE doctrine of a Providence ſeems to be founded on the general ſenſe of mankind. That the world was produced by ſome great Being, who is himſelf eternal, is the voice of nature and of reaſon. And, that this being who created the univerſe continues to preſerve it, ſeems to be acknowledged and felt by all—from the ignorant worſhipper of "the unknown God," to the enlightened adorer of the revealed divinity.

But, whilſt all have allowed to the Deity the general ſuperintendance of the world, there are many who aſſent not to his particular interpoſitions in the affairs of human life. In the revolutions of Empires, indeed, or other important matters that

that paſs on a more extenſive theatre, the divine agency hath been readily admitted. The intereſts of a community have appeared of ſufficient magnitude, to juſtify the interference of Heaven. But, in deſcending to the caſes of individuals, the ſceptic doubts the interpoſing hand, becauſe thoſe caſes are comparatively trivial.

Here, however, we judge of the Deity by ourſelves: we preſumptuouſly eſtimate his conceptions by the ſtandard of our own. The individual, whoſe preſervation from danger we deem of little importance to ſociety, may involve in his fate the moſt momentous circumſtances; ſuch as He only who knows all things, can diſcern. Such is, often, the complication of our characters, and ſo intimately connected are the fortunes of one perſon with thoſe of others, that it is not in human ſagacity to determine, at any point of time, the exact merits of an individual, to meaſure his morality with preciſion, or to unravel the final cauſe of his exiſtence. Let us imagine a perſon, who hath eſcaped impending danger, in ſo ſingular a manner as to ſuggeſt to every reflecting mind, a Providence interpoſing in his favor. Perhaps, at the moment he was ſnatched from death, there

were others, his companions, who periſhed: yet his ſituation in life, his connexions, his abilities, and his character, might not be ſuch, as to mark the expediency of his preſervation, in preference to others. Many of thoſe, indeed, who fell, might have filled a ſtation more reſpectable than his own, might have been really more neceſſary to the comfort or ſupport of their friends, might have poſſeſt more uſeful talents, or have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by virtues more immediately beneficial to mankind.

In this caſe we cannot account for the interpoſition of the Deity. No important end was apparently anſwered by the preſervation of this individual. To have exerted itſelf in behalf of his companions, would have been worthy of a Providence. That he ſtill continues to exiſt, therefore, can be aſcribed only to chance, or accident.

But, ſurely, we are wrong in drawing any concluſion from ſo *partial* a ſurvey, at leaſt, of any man's character or conduct.

Reaſon, probably, would extend her views ſtill farther, and look to his future life for a reſolution of the queſtion. If his life be eventually uſeful, ſhe will diſcover the hand of God in his reſcue:

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But if his life be unimportant or obſcure, ſhe will attribute his eſcape, poſſibly, to chance. Yet ſhort-ſighted reaſon is ſurely incompetent to the ſubject. She cannot weigh the merit of any ſingle action; ſhe cannot point out its tendency, or ſee through its conſequences: how, then, can ſhe decide upon a ſeries of actions? How can ſhe trace the motives in which they originated, or mark the effects which they produce in connexion with the actions of others? The effects of our conduct are, often, as ſecret as the motives. The influence of an individual operates on the great maſs of ſociety, with a ſilent and imperceptible progreſs. The meaneſt perſon hath been, often, the inſtrument of eſſential good or evil; though we knew not whence it came.

But man is not to be judged in relation to this life only: he ſtands connected with another world! and reaſon will not preſume to eſtimate the exact value of any one's actions, in regard to a future retribution.

It is plain, then, that after all our experiments of this ſort, we ſhall never be furniſhed with ſufficient data, by which to determine, whether Providence interferes or not in the caſes of individuals.

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To aſſert, that Providence was not concerned in the reſcue of an individual from danger, becauſe his ſubſequent life does not warrant, in our eſtimation, ſo particular an act of heaven—is no leſs impious than arrogant. If one eſcape be merely fortuitous, other eſcapes of the ſame nature, at leaſt, muſt, by parity of reaſon, be judged ſo: and thus abandoning ourſelves to chance, we gradually proceed to exclude a deity from the care of the world. For where ſhall we delineate the boundary between chance and Providence? Where ſhall we determine the point, where chance ſhall end, and Providence begin? The bounding line muſt, ſurely, be viſionary! To mortal eyes the point will be ever evaneſcent!

But it was by no means my intention to enter into ſo *ſpeculative* a conſideration of the ſubject. The moſt ſuperficial view of our *condition* in this world, might be enough to convince us, that we are, every inſtant, protected and upheld by Him "who giveth to all, life and breath, and all "things!" Such are the imperfections and weakneſſes of man, that he no ſooner looks around him and reflects on his condition, than he is conſcious of being

being placed in a world, the natural order of which he is unable to change or even comprehend! If he look up to the firmament on high, or mark "the earth that hangeth upon nothing," yet is directed to perform its revolutions ſo as to diverſify the ſeaſons in their order—if he contemplate the light and heat which the ſun diſpenſes through all our planetary ſyſtem, and the atmoſphere ſurrounding our globe, on the proper temperature of which the whole human race depends, and that of all animated nature—he ſees himſelf, in reſpect to theſe wonderful operations, a feeble, paſſive being, nor can claim the ſlighteſt ſhare in the conduct of the univerſe. The ſeaſons viſit us in ſucceſſion;—yet the hopes of ſpring are ſometimes diſſipated by untimely blaſts: The genial warmth of ſummer is exchanged for cold and moiſture: The unmellowed fruitage of autumn is ſuddenly cut off; and even the ſulphureous thunder-ſtorm alarms us, as the lightnings blaze amidſt the ſnows of winter. And all this, we can neither foreſee nor prevent.

But it is not with reſpect to the material world alone, that we feel our imperfections and frailties.

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The laws, by which mankind ſubſiſt in politic ſocieties, which we conſider as our own, and in the framing of which we may have borne a part, are manifeſt teſtimonies of human imbecillity.

They are founded, perhaps, on the experience of ages: they are tranſmitted to us, as the moſt finiſhed productions of earthly wiſdom. Yet are they replete with error. They are often inadequate: they are frequently partial. And, at one time, deliberate reaſon removes a blemiſh: At another, impetuous paſſion annihilates the whole legiſlative ſyſtem. Nor could the ſoundeſt ſcheme of policy exiſt, amidſt our jarring intereſts, opinions, and caprices, if only upheld by the power of man.

Amidſt all our *purſuits*, *ſituations*, and *connexions*, we diſcover the ſame infirmities in ourſelves, and the ſame proofs of a divine ſuperintendence.

A thouſand accidents may intervene to deſtroy the faireſt plans of happineſs. Difficulties may ſtart up in our way; and dangers may ſuddenly aſſail us: Circumſtances apparently the moſt trivial may derange the whole order of our lives. Though no individual can attain the object of his purſuit, without various aſſiſtance from others, yet

to

to others he cannot truſt. The moſt flattering promiſes may prove fallacious; and even the friendſhip of years may fail. Nay, he cannot even truſt to himſelf. Full of trembling apprehenſion, he enters on a new and arduous path; yet finds himſelf ſupported by a reſolution that he ſcarcely recognizes, and paſſes triumphantly through the ſcene of trial. Confident of his own ſtrength, where he has often eſcaped unhurt, he is ſurprized in the midſt of his fancied ſecurity, and falls, at once, the victim of temptation.

There is no *ſituation* in life that is ſufficiently ſecure, to permit us to rely upon ourſelves.

The *rich* and the *powerful* may glory in their opulence and power: they may boaſt their treaſures for a moment, and imagine that "the ſtrength of their own hands hath gotten them their wealth." They may plume themſelves, for an inſtant, on their flattering diſtinctions. But will they elevate themſelves, on this deceitful ground, above the level of humanity; whilſt they diſcover in the quick tranſition of property from one owner to another, the precarioufneſs of their poſſeſſions, and of every privilege accompanying wealth? And will they yet heſitate to acknowledge

" the hand that giveth, and the hand that taketh away?" Painful experience, perhaps, is yet wanting to teach them a leſſon of humility: Nor will they return to him who hath " given them all things ſo richly to enjoy," till they feel, in their own perſons, the viciſſitudes of life.

It is the ſame with thoſe, who experience in the diſſolution of their cloſeſt *connexions*, the inſtability of earthly friendſhips. When they loſe their friends through treachery, or death, or any other misfortune—when they ſee their deareſt relations dropping off before them, and when they find themſelves forſaken by the world; they turn to him from whom they had revolted: they acknowledge his long ſuffering and great goodneſs; they are anxious to conciliate the favor of the only laſting Friend, and are ſincerely happy whilſt they repoſe in the mercies of a reconciled Father!

But even the moſt valuable bleſſing we enjoy, even health is frequently experienced with an unthankful heart. It is the interruption of our health that awakens us from inſenſibility, and brings us back to him " by whom we live and move and have our being." Sickneſs recalls our wandering thoughts, and fixes them upon God.

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It is then too, we ſeriouſly reflect on our departure from this world, and view our frailties in their trueſt light. It is then, we remember, with pious fervor, " that God is our ſtrength, and that the high God is our redeemer."

We are all convinced, therefore, by experience, that we are by no means *independent creatures*, and that we exiſt only by the favor of the Almighty, who proſpers or who fruſtrates our purſuits—who upholds us in affluence, or reduces us to penury; who gives us, or takes from us our friends, who beſtows on us health, or who viſits us with ſickneſs.

From every conſideration of the ſubject, indeed, the idea of a Providence ſeems to be inſtinctive: It is interwoven in the very principles of our conſtitution.

But, in the mean time, we are moſt ſenſible of the divine favor and protection, when we meet with unexpected ſuccour in the midſt of embaraſſment; when ourſelves or our friends are delivered from diſtreſs, in ſituations, where hope had almoſt deſerted us.

Perhaps ſome of you may recollect inſtances where you acknowledged the divine interpoſition, whilſt all other aſſiſtance was vain.

Conſider, for a moment, your circumſtances and connexions.

Are there not ſome among you, who having looked forward to the gloomy proſpect of being reduced to want, and deſerted by the world, who, dreading every miſery that accompanies poverty, were yet relieved, by an inviſible hand, from their perplexities and terrors, and reſtored to the comforts of life? Say, was it not the hand of Providence that relieved you? and were not your hearts inſpired with gratitude towards your benevolent protector? are there none among you, who once actually numbered among the "poor deſolate," are now bleſſed with better days? In theſe revolutions you were doubtleſs awakened to a ſenſe of God's providence. Are there not many in this congregation, who thanking God for their recovery from illneſs, have more impreſſively felt the divine goodneſs, than if their health had been never interrupted? Is there no one in this place, who can recollect the time when his life was in dreadful ſuſpenſe; when deſpaired of by his attendants and his friends, he expected diſſolution every moment, and yet was reſcued from death by the mercies of heaven? Is there no parent here,

who

who long watching over his beloved offspring, that languiſhed on the bed of ſickneſs, had marked the feebleneſs of ſinking nature with many a tear of bitter diſtreſs, night after night had hung over the pillow of his poor ſuffering child, felt the ebbing pulſe in agony, and often fancied that the breath was departed; yet ſaw *that* child reviving, and at length reſtored to the hopes of affection? And did he not look up with the warmeſt feelings and expreſſions of gratitude to that indulgent Being, who ever hears the prayers of the diſconſolate, who knoweth all our weakneſſes, and pities us "even as a father pitieth his own children?" Is there no huſband preſent, who remembers the hour, when death ſeemed ready to diſſolve the tendereſt of connexions, who had bid a long adieu to the fond ſharer of all his domeſtic pleaſures—of all his domeſtic anxieties—who had caught from her quivering lips what he fancied the laſt accents of love, yet who was ſuddenly brought back to comfort and to joy, by the recovery of the wife of his boſom? Is there no affectionate wife, who recollects the mercies of providence in ſimilar diſtreſs?

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If, in theſe caſes, we have acknowledged the divine interpoſition, let us be aſſured, that our God no leſs preſides over us, every inſtant of our lives—that his eye beholds us in every ſituation, whether proſperous or adverſe—that he "ſpieth out all our ways," and that he alone "can ſtrengthen the feeble knees, and preſerve our feet from falling."

Such is the voice of nature!—ſuch are the ſentiments of humanity!

In the mean time, the ſcriptures may be entitled an hiſtory of a particular Providence.

There is ſcarcely a page in the ſacred writings, which does not preſent us with ſome examples of the divine interpoſition, in the affairs of men, or ſome reflections on the providence of God. To adduce from the hiſtorical or other books of ſcripture, the numerous inſtances of God's communication with individuals, and his evident deliverance of them from various ſpecies of calamities—to quote from the Pſalmiſt in particular, thoſe beautiful paſſages which exhibit a ſuperintending power—to bring together from the goſpels and other parts of the New Teſtament, the more endearing portraits (as it were) "of our heavenly father,"

father," would be perfectly unneceſſary in the preſent congregation.

The pious, indeed, delight in awakening their devotional feelings, by recurring to ſuch repreſentations. " When we conſider the heavens, the moon and the ſtars which God hath ordained," we may aſk, as we feel our own comparative inſignificance, at the ſame time that we experience his providential care: " Lord, what is man, that *thou* art ſo mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?—for thou knoweſt our down-ſitting and our upriſing, and underſtandeſt our thoughts afar off." Conſcious of His omnipreſence, we may ſtill aſk with the Pſalmiſt of Iſrael, " Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? if I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there alſo. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea, even there, alſo, ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me." Full of comfort are the reflexions we may indulge, whilſt we know, that though pervading all ſpace, he yet attends to the minuteſt things—whilſt we know, that " he feeds the fowls of the air, and tempers the winds to the

ſhorn

ſhorn lamb, and cloaths the lilies of the field—that without him not a ſparrow falleth to the ground—that we are of more value than many ſparrows, and that *the very hairs of our head are all numbered.*"

Since, then, it is evident from reaſon, from nature, and from the ſacred ſcriptures, that we are placed under God's particular direction and guardianſhip; how ſedulous ſhould we be, to preſerve on our minds, the impreſſion of his paternal care!

To this end we ſhould, at ſtated periods, "acknowledge and confeſs our ſins"—we "ſhould render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands"—"we ſhould ſet forth his moſt worthy praiſe"—"and we ſhould aſk thoſe things which are requiſite and neceſſary, as well for the body as the ſoul." It is private prayer, in particular, which God himſelf hath appointed, as the means of ſupporting this heavenly intercourſe. "Let us, then, draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience." Let us approach the great preſerver of our being, with an humble ſubmiſſion to his will, and with a chearful confidence

in

in his goodneſs. Every morning, let us thank him for protecting us from the perils of the night: Every evening, let us praiſe him for guiding us through the day paſt. Never may we riſe from our beds without the delightful hope that our purſuits ſhall meet his favor! Never may we lie down without the comfortable aſſurance that we ſhall reſt under the ſhadow of his wings! Often, in the midſt of our occupations and employments, let us lift our hearts to our heavenly parent, and intreat a bleſſing on our honeſt exertions! Let us conſider, that in *private* prayer, we hold the moſt endearing intercourſe with the Almighty. In our ſecret retirement, we need not fear the cenſure of man, who might attribute our fervor to hypocriſy: there no eye beholds us but the eye of heaven. There may we pour out the breathings of a contrite heart; aſſured, that not a thought will be miſinterpreted—not a ſigh will eſcape from us unnoticed!

It is this communion, that will heighten the joys—that will medicate the ills of life:—It is this that will prevent us from being over-ſolicitous about the periſhable things of the world—that will raiſe us far above the little vanities of life, and the

poor competitions of contending mortals. It is this that will prompt us to forgive the injuries we may caſually receive, and to place them to the account of our common infirmities: It is this that will unite us together in the bonds of benevolence and love—that will diſpoſe us to rejoice with the happy, and ſympathize with the wretched; ſeeing our heavenly Father is the parent of us all: It is this, in ſhort, that will give us a foretaſte of heaven, whilſt yet we ſojourn upon earth—till at length "we ſee Him—in whoſe preſence is fullneſs "of joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for "evermore!"

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE XXII.

ST. MARK, vi. 52.

They conſidered not the miracle—for their hearts were hardened.

OUR Saviour had juſt performed a miracle, ſufficient to convince the moſt inſenſible of his divine authority. He had " fed five thouſand " men, with five loaves and two fiſhes;" yet his diſciples, who had aſſiſted him in the diſtribution of theſe proviſions among the multitude, ſeemed to have paſſed over the miracle with a ſtrange degree of negligence.

Struck, as they muſt neceſſarily have been, by this occurrence, they were nevertheleſs unprepared for any future diſplay of our Saviour's power; for " they were greatly troubled when they ſaw him " walking upon the ſea, ſuppoſing it had been a

" ſpirit." And, what no leſs proves their want of reflection, " when he went up unto them into " the ſhip, and the wind ceaſed, they were ſore " amazed in themſelves beyond meaſure, and " wondered;—for they *conſidered* not the miracle " of the loaves, becauſe their *heart* was *hardened.*"

That this is too juſt a repreſentation of the thoughtleſſneſs of Chriſtians, in our own times, muſt readily be granted by the moſt ſuperficial obſerver. Miracles, it is true, have ceaſed: But the hand of God is ſtill conſpicuous in various occurrences: There are abundant proofs of divine agency within the circle of every man's experience.

Such, however, is the ſingular complexion of ſome incidents, that, notwithſtanding all our indifference in religious concerns, we can ſcarcely help aſcribing the glory of them to God, whilſt we feel an impreſſion of his power or goodneſs. But this impreſſion is ſeldom permanent. Events, no leſs providential, ſoon after occur; and, perhaps, in ſtupid wonder, we call them ſtrange contingencies.

This, then, is owing to an inſenſibility, which we have ſuffered to grow habitual. " We do not " conſider; for our hearts are *hardened.*" It is

buſineſs

buſineſs—it is pleaſure, that renders us thus indifferent and careleſs. Our worldly affairs ſo occupy our thoughts, that we allow ourſelves ſcarcely any leiſure for religious conſideration. And in the houſe of feaſting, little is to be expected but levity. The cuſtoms and faſhions of the world, imperceptibly draw us off from religion: And thus, though poſſibly unconſcious of any purſuits highly criminal, "the love of many waxeth cold."

Chiefly, therefore, for the ſake of thoſe, who are by no means the avowed enemies of religion, though they are not diſpoſed to reflect on it: who are not often guilty of flagrant offences, though they are rarely diſtinguiſhed for any active virtues; I ſhall have recourſe to a few incidents that have recently happened, ſuch as may be rendered the inſtruments of admonition and inſtruction.

If general reflexions do not operate on our minds with a ſufficient ſtrength, let us try the force of particular example.

Of all the public events, which might be converted to a religious uſe, few, perhaps, more awful have occurred, than the ſubject of our meditations but a few months ſince. You muſt readily perceive

ceive that I allude to the day, when I repreſented to you the picture of our Sovereign, afflicted with a diſeaſe the moſt terrible that human nature was ever doomed to ſuſtain. The annals of paſt ages, as I informed you, can ſcarcely afford us ſo ſtriking an example, of a good King labouring under the ſevereſt of maladies. The ſufferings of the Monarch was juſtly felt by his loyal and affectionate ſubjects, as one of the heavieſt calamities that could befal them. We contemplated this ſuſpenſion of the regal government, with the moſt alarming apprehenſions. Yet, recollecting the mild virtues of our Sovereign, his attachment to the intereſts of the community, and that amiable character in domeſtic life, which he hath at all times been happy to exhibit on a more extenſive ſcale, as the friend and the father of his people; our terrors were loſt in ſympathy, whilſt we ſaw ſo generous a mind deprived of all its powers—its ray of reaſon quenched in the cloud of inſanity.

Amidſt this humiliating ſcene, we turned our eyes to the Almighty, and implored aſſiſtance at the throne of grace. We prayed to the great diſ-

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poſer of events, that he would commiſerate our diſtreſſes, and raiſe from the duſt our fallen King. The petition was univerſal and ſincere; and our intreaties were heard. The beams of gladneſs again brightened around us; and we united in ſolemn thankſgiving to the God of all comfort, as we beheld our Sovereign reſtored to his people.

In *his* public acknowledgment of the divine mercy, though doubtleſs attended with all the ſplendor that became ſo conſpicuous a perſonage, we diſcovered no oſtentatious parade or idle ceremony, but the moſt unequivocal humility.

The ſpectacle of Majeſty, proſtrated before the throne of omnipotence, amidſt crowds of his generous Britons, to the joy of ſurrounding nations; inſtead of ſuggeſting any notion of unbecoming pomp, inſpired us with the livelieſt ideas of a good and pious character—awakened to the bleſſings of a life that was endeared to him by the love of all his ſubjects throughout the Britiſh Empire—diſtinguiſhed by genuine benevolence towards his fellow-citizens, marked by the ſincereſt gratitude to the God who had re-enlightened his mind, and ardent in acknowledging his dependence on heaven.

heaven. He arrogated nothing to himſelf, but came forth an example to the world, as of reaſon loſt, ſo of reaſon reſtored. His very act of praiſing God for the repoſſeſſion of his mental faculties, implied the loſs he had ſuſtained—a loſs by which he was evidently reduced to the loweſt ſtate of human imbecility.

In the moral application of this incident to ourſelves, it is obvious to reflect, that the Ruler of the univerſe, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, regards with an equal eye the greateſt Monarch upon earth, and the meaneſt Peaſant that earns his bread by the ſweat of his brow. He hath no reſpect of perſons. Kings are expoſed to the ſame maladies as their ſubjects. The robe of royalty conceals not our frailneſs from the Almighty. The deliverance of our King, alſo, from his ſevere affliction, may teach us to eſtimate our proſperity as we ought, and to perceive a felicity, of which we were before, perhaps, inſenſible, by contraſting the hour of danger and diſtreſs with the moments of generous ſympathy and univerſal gladneſs.

This, then, is one of thoſe events which I have thought proper to recall to your minds; becauſe

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it is replete with the moſt intereſting morality. May we never be deaf to the admonitions of providence, whether conveyed by public calamities or private misfortunes! May we be duly affected by the divine goodneſs, whether diſplayed on a large or a leſs extenſive field!

But as it always happens that the nearer we approach our own particular circumſtances, the more we are affected; let us deſcend from theſe heights to humbler views. Let us *conſider* a few events, that muſt neceſſarily have been the ſubject of your obſervation, if not reflexion: Within our own neighbourhood, we might find a variety of examples, both for exhortation and for inſtruction in righteouſneſs.

It may not be improper to premiſe, that the truths which are conſtantly echoed from the pulpit, paſs off, on ordinary occaſions, with ſo little an effect, as ſcarcely to produce the feebleſt reſolutions of amendment. But at thoſe awful moments, when we meet together to pay the laſt offices to the dead, the ſame truths are not ſlightly regarded: The mind at ſuch a ſeaſon is naturally more ſerious, and conſequently better diſpoſed for their reception. This ſeriouſneſs, however, is occaſioned

by the obſervation of the deceaſed before you, and the melancholy groupe of his ſurviving friends, and other objects that immediately ſtrike your ſenſes. To bring back, therefore, ſuch objects to your remembrance, if aſſociated with any thing more than ordinarily affecting, will be to renew a train of ideas that may operate to your moral improvement.

Perhaps you have ſeldom witneſſed a more diſtreſſing ſight than that which a ſhort time ſince ſeemed to intereſt every ſpectator—a little family weeping over the grave of their mother—a numerous progeny, for the firſt time made ſenſible of calamity, by the loſs of their parent—ſo early warned of death, by having their deareſt, their only relation ſnatched away from them for ever—thrown upon an unfeeling world, yet little conſcious of its unfriendlineſs—looking up to *you* for comfort, and ſnatching, even amidſt their tears, a gleam of joy, as they perceived your momentary ſympathy, and fancied *you* their guardians! We were doubly touched by their ſimplicity and their helpleſſneſs. Hard is that heart, which never experienced a tender emotion on viewing little children with no thought beyond the moment, and with

confidence in every one as their friend—delighted with novelties and occupied by deluſions. Hard is the heart that pitieth not the unſuſpecting tribe, now free from anxieties and guilt, yet entering into a world, which ſhall involve them in cares, and encircle them with temptations! But to have ſeen ſuch infants hanging over a mother's grave, and wringing their little hands as " earth was " thrown to earth, aſhes to aſhes, duſt to duſt"—to have viewed them with no guide or adviſer—though ready to be taught without a teacher—though harmleſs, yet ſoon, perhaps, to be abandoned to wickedneſs—though awake to every call, yet on the road to miſery, with no friendly voice to warn them of their danger—ſuch a ſpectacle could not but move the moſt unfeeling boſom.

But we have had various warnings of late, that ought ſurely to affect us deeply. Scarcely a week has paſſed without ſome occurrence which might be turned to good account, if you would only determine to *conſider* it.

Parents have alſo been deprived of their children—deprived by ſudden misfortune.

You well know the diſconſolate father, whoſe child was cruſhed by the wheels of his carriage—while his eyes beheld its agonies.

And another inſtance, more recent ſtill, of what we call accidental death, deſerves your moſt ſerious attention.

The dangers, indeed, which ſurround us, are ſo numerous, that the grave ſeems opening to receive us, at almoſt every ſtep. Death appears in a thouſand forms, and arms the very elements againſt us. Whilſt the peſtilence walketh in darkneſs, and the arrow flieth at noon day; the air may gather its lightnings to ſtrike us dead, the earth may open to devour us, and the waters may go over our ſoul: The waters, indeed, may not only overwhelm us, but carry our bodies beyond the reach of man, to be a prey for the fiſhes of the ſea.

Such frail remains were but lately reſcued from the inhabitants of the deep, to be exhibited, as a freſh inſtance of human inſecurity. *He*, who only a few ſhort minutes before his ſenſes were numbed in cold oblivion, was intent on no other object than pleaſure—than the vacant amuſement of an hour, was hurried off to the ſcene of retribution,

bution, in the midſt of his youthful enjoyments. Death could not have occupied his thoughts till he found himſelf at the point of diſſolution. And, then, indeed, when he ſaw the waves ready to cover him, and threatening to extinguiſh every ſpark of life; his only exertions muſt have been to ſhun his fate too faſt approaching, whilſt he ſtruggled againſt the floods, and hoped, at every effort, to reach thoſe banks in proſpect, which he was deſtined to reviſit no more. The aid of his companions, alſo, was ſtill in expectation. Even when, exhauſted, he had ſunk into the depth of the waters, and riſing once again, was now to be ingulphed for ever—at that moment of horror he might have ſeen a glimpſe of death; yet he clung to the feebleſt twig of life, and his hope and his ſenſes were almoſt extinguiſhed together.

Happy is it for mortals, that Hope vouchſafes them her aid, to the very laſt—the kind—the generous comforter, to cheer their paſſage from this world to the next. She ſuccours us in all our diſtreſſes—ſhe attends us in life and in death—the honeſt friend that never deſerts us. It was through her that the parent ſupported himſelf, though the waves had long cloſed over the ſtiffened corſe! It

was

was through her, that whilſt the breath of life was vainly attempted to be reſtored, he yet fancied he beheld the moment when his child ſhould revive and look up to the tears of affection—when the ſon ſhould again bleſs the eyes of a fond mother agonized with grief, and "turn their ſor-"rows into joy." He, however, who had ſo long been the object of parental ſolicitude, who had now grown up to an age that promiſed ſome recompenſe to his friends for all their attention to his childhood, who might have ſhared with them the good things of life, have lightened the preſſure of affliction, proved a comfort to their declining years, and attending them in the courſe of nature to their graves, have bleſt their memories by an honeſt deportment in the ſtation which providence had allotted them—he, whoſe youth and vigor lent them theſe fair promiſes, was thus ſuddenly ſnatched from their ſight, and irrecoverably loſt.

Such is the will of the Almighty! We are not left to be the ſport of accident, though environed by dangers on every ſide. Nothing happens by chance: Whether we live or whether we die—whether we ſhall breathe our laſt on the bed of ſickneſs,

ſickneſs, or ſink into diſſolution by no common fate—whether our bodies ſhall be committed to the duſt to moulder beneath the tomb—or to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the reſurrection, when the earth and the ſea ſhall alike reſign their dead—ſtill are all things ordered by the moſt high God, by whom we live this moment, and by whom we ſhall exiſt through eternity!

Let not, then, the friends of him who periſhed, lament the ſuddenneſs of the ſtroke. To be thus launched into another world, is doubtleſs terrible. No time, it is true, was allowed him for repenting of his faults or frailties—for that religious conſideration of death, which the ſinfulneſs of our nature renders expedient as a preparation for the day of judgment. Yet, we truſt, his attention to his proper employments, and his regard to filial duty, with a good diſpoſition of heart, will recommend him to the mercies of God, notwithſtanding the errors of youth, through the force of manifold temptation.

Happy, indeed, are they, who have often ſeriouſly "conſidered their latter end;" and when the hour of their departure draweth nigh, can look back

back on the years that are paſt, with joy and not with grief; who can carry their views beyond the grave with a cheerful confidence in their God!

Would that theſe reflexions might be indulged without interruption! But on this ſubject, leſs pleaſing ideas muſt occur—as but a few days ſince I endeavoured to deſcribe to you the laſt moments of a perſon who could ſcarcely be ſaid "to die the "death of the righteous."

He had profeſſed himſelf a chriſtian, by attending his church, and acting as others do, who are neither remarkable for their zeal or their neglect of duty. Of the holy communion he had never participated in the church of God; nor, till he ſaw his own death approaching, did he commemorate the death of his Redeemer. He had never thought ſeriouſly of religion, till he was unable to think of the world. It is for your warning I mention facts without flattery: Yet, I preſume not to decide on a character, that can only be eſtimated by the Searcher of all hearts. Permit me, however, to obſerve, that though we may ſlight or overlook the duties of religion, in the vigor of life, we generally ſhew our ſenſe of their obligation, and ſometimes the ſharpeſt compunction when we are called

called to ſerioufneſs and reflexion by pain and ſickneſs, when every opportunity of redeeming our time is loſt, perhaps, for ever. In the nature of things it is impoſſible, that we can perform religious duties in illneſs, with the ſame degree of exertion as in health. And it is ſurely a bad compliment to our Maker, to ſacrifice to him, the remnants of our decayed appetites and paſſions. When all other reſources are gone, we fly to him whom we never before wiſhed to approach. And tis not till we find ourſelves out of the reach of human aid, that we acknowledge him, who hath always ſupported us.

Theſe are truths, which illuſtrated by the example before us, ſhould "come home to our bo-"ſoms," with a force to rouſe us from religious lethargy. But theſe admonitions, I fear, will have little effect on your minds. Is there one among you, who, on the next ſabbath will attend the holy communion, from a conviction of his former indifference—from a ſincere deſire to redeem the time that is loſt, whilſt his health and his ſpirits may admit of his performing an acceptable ſacrifice to heaven? Many are now before me who have not once in their lives commemorated the

paſſion or the death of Chriſt. But is there a ſingle perſon preſent, that would not ſee and feel the neceſſity of remembering his Redeemer, when an alarming illneſs threatened diſſolution? CONSIDER, however, whether your efforts at thoſe feeble moments, when the ſoul and body are about to be diſſolved, are likely to avail, or not, with the God of Juſtice. It is true, he is a God of mercy, and will make great allowances for our imperfections and miſcarriages.

But let us not deceive ourſelves. To repoſe in a fancied ſecurity, is the moſt dangerous of all ſituations. My intention is to rouſe you, if poſſible, by theſe examples, from religious indifference—to warn you of the dangers that ſurround you—to excite in you a ſenſe of your infirmities, and conſequently to point your views to Him, who is alone able to protect and to ſtrengthen you.

If theſe occurrences, which I have mentioned to you, work together for your edification, I ſhall felicitate myſelf on the uſe to which I have applied them: If otherwiſe, I ſhall yet rejoice from a conſciouſneſs, that I have performed the duty of a Paſtor in admoniſhing his flock.

TO

TO conclude—I am anxious to convince you of one important truth, which cannot be too often enforced, that the mere profeſſion of chriſtianity without thoſe lively feelings which are the vital ſpring, the principle of action, can never deſerve to be dignified with the name of religion.

In the common concerns of life we diſcover no unfeelingneſs: On our temporal purſuits we enter not with careleſſneſs or languor. And ſhall we be negligent and thoughtleſs in thoſe matters, which ſurely ought to intereſt us more than all the occupations or pleaſures of this world?

Perhaps you think you diſcharge your duty, if you regularly allot your ſeventh day to the ſervice of your Maker: But is not this a mere oſtenſible ſervice? Is it not for the ſake of form, that you attend the houſe of God? And do you imagine, that the Almighty Father, who is to be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth, will accept ſuch a poor contemptible ſacrifice—can you conceive, that he will look down with approbation on a mere ceremonial attendance at the houſe of prayer, whilſt we experience no devotional delights, or only feel, perhaps, at ſome moments, a tranſitory gleam abſorbed at once in indifference or apathy? Not that

I would expect all to be alike affected. One individual will doubtleſs differ much from another, in his feelings, owing to his natural conſtitution or his habits of life.

But it is to wrong—to vicious habits of life, that our inſenſibility is, in general, to be attributed.

Admitting, however, that your *hearts* are not ſo *hardened*, as to be callous to every religious impreſſion—admitting that you are ſometimes moved and even agitated, whilſt your ſalvation is the topic of diſcuſſion, of what avail are your emotions, if, immediately on your going back into the world, they are loſt in the vortex of diſſipation? Alas! our attempts to perſuade men are of little conſequence, if the glow of religion, which our diſcourſes may raiſe in their minds, ſo quickly paſſes away; whilſt the voluptuary returns to his laſciviouſneſs, the miſer to his avarice, the intemperate perſon to his drunkenneſs, the profane ſwearer to his blaſphemies. Real feeling and reflexion muſt ever revolt from ſuch inconſiſtencies.

The actions of a chriſtian muſt originate in a heart ſo ſteadily fixed on God, as to be awake, in all circumſtances, to his providential warnings.

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The heart—the devoted heart is required of us! To this our bleſſed Saviour almoſt ever appealed in his diſcourſes and his miracles: And to this the Apoſtle addreſſes himſelf, when, after various admonitions deduced from particular example, he thus exhorts his chriſtian friends: "Finally breth-
" ren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever
" things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt,
" whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things
" are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report
" —if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe,
" THINK on theſe things!

ESSAY

ON THE

Comparative Learning and Morality

OF THE

ANCIENTS AND MODERNS.

SECTION I.

THAT the World grows worſe in proportion as it grows old, hath been a common complaint, from the time of Homer, to the preſent day. To the eye of the multitude, every new generation of men, ſeems marked with ſome ſtriking defects before unknown—the criteria of degeneracy, and the preſages of ruin. To ſuperficial minds the declenſion of learning and of virtue appears too plain a fact to be proved by demonſtration. But, what is moſt ſurprizing, the learned and intelligent join the general voice; and induſtriouſly proclaim, to the diſgrace of their contemporaries, the increaſing ignorance and vicioufneſs of the times.

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Though this diſpoſition to prefer the paſt to the preſent, hath been equally prevalent in every age; yet the propriety or juſtice of our deciding on former periods, ſeems to have been rarely diſputed or examined.

To ſay that the preſent is more immoral than the laſt; that the next ſhall be proportionably vicious; and that each ſucceeding progeny ſhall degenerate in the ſame ratio, is ſo palpable an abſurdity as cannot but excite indignant feelings. Such, however, is the declamation of Horace. And nothing can be more clear than that it is totally void of truth. For what muſt have been our depravity ere this, had our moral retrogradation continued, from the time of the Roman Poet to the preſent day? Have we not ſome reaſon, therefore, to ſuſpect our own judgment on the point in queſtion, when we ſee the deluſion of Horace, and of many before him, who as prepoſterouſly erred; receiving the popular opinions upon truſt, and miſtaking a fiction for an axiom?

Whether the moderns are inferior, in general, to the ancients; or whether the preſent generation are inferior to their forefathers, are topics of enquiry, which none but the learned or experienced

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are able to diſcuſs. The general queſtion is only for the man of erudition, who can diſplay an extenſive repreſentation of remote antiquity, as contraſted with modern times. But the prejudices of the learned are as ſtrongly rooted, as thoſe of the vulgar. And, unfortunately, the learned are too often diſqualified for a taſk which others are incapable of undertaking, by their prepoſſeſſion in favor of antiquity. 'Tis an early and a natural prepoſſeſſion. For his ſtores of knowledge, the ſcholar is chiefly indebted to the ancients. From a ſchool-boy, he hath been taught to venerate the claſſic writers as ſhedding a glory over Greece and Rome. From a child, he hath imbibed the Pagan morals. To Socrates or to Minos, he hath looked up as to the ſplendid examples of philoſophical and political wiſdom; and he hath regarded the warriors of Marathon or Philippi, as the models of heroic virtue. On reviewing claſſic ſcenes, he connects with them the years of puerility; when they firſt were opened to his gay and vivid fancy. Who, then, can blame him for reviewing them with delight, with gratitude, with affection? But we cannot implicitly truſt to his judgment, on the ſubject before us; becauſe we muſt imagine him

prediſpoſed to favour what he hath long been accuſtomed to contemplate with partiality.

As to the compariſon of the riſing generation with their forefathers, the undertaking, perhaps, ſhould be committed to men, who have had ſome experience in the world, and who are thoroughly acquainted with the characters of a few preceding centuries.

But men of experience are ſo deeply engaged in the affairs of the world, ſo much embarraſſed by cares, and ſo frequently diſappointed in their ſchemes of buſineſs or pleaſure, that, if they endeavour to ſpeculate on former times, they are ſeldom offended at vices, the contemplation of which relieves their anxieties, ſince they find nothing to affect their quiet or endanger their ſafety. The picture of iniquities that are no more, is neither ominous nor alarming. They who judge from their own experience, have often lived ſo long as to be diſſatisfied with life. And they can hardly attribute to paſt times ſuch intellectual and moral depravity, as hath fallen under their own obſervation.

Querulous as they grow old, they ſee defects in every paſſing object; and have recourſe, for ſatisfaction,

faction, to the paſt. And having pleaſure in recollection, they naturally exerciſe their memories. But the vices which they ſee, are more ſtriking than thoſe which they remember. In vain would they find parallels in the times over which they fondly brood, to match the glaring inſtances of iniquity, that are daily inſpiring them with antipathy and horror. They inveigh, with aſperity, therefore, againſt the riſing race; and give all the credit to the days of their youth. Thus, whether the experienced compare their own obſervations with the records of hiſtory, or conſider the objects that forcibly ſtrike their ſenſes in oppoſition to what they feebly collect from memory; they are ever diſpoſed to think better of their predeceſſors than their contemporaries—of the generation which is paſſing away, than of that which is ready to ſucceed it. Our opinion of human nature grows unfavourable in proportion as we grow old. Inſtead of endeavouring to reſtrain this inclination to cenſure, in themſelves, the aged are ever ſedulous to damp the warm benevolence, or diſſipate the fond vanities of the young; who, ſanguine in their promiſes of happineſs, judge well of all around them, and think the preſent times are rapidly improving on the paſt.

" *But ſorrow never comes too late,*
" *And happineſs too ſwiftly flies!*"

The aged, in ſhort, with all their knowledge, are very incompetent judges of men and manners; while, little attending to the real appearance of things, they form their eſtimate from their own ſenſations, and ſpeak as they feel themſelves affected, amidſt bodily decay, and mental laſſitude. They think the world on the decline; becauſe they are no longer able to reliſh the world. They fancy they have ſeen human nature changing for the worſe: But the change is only in themſelves. They are jaundiced; and every object is diſcoloured: They are blind; and all around them is darkneſs. The amiable and philoſophical Harris was ſo far from being affected, when an old man, by this miſerable infirmity, that, even at the cloſe of life, he was accuſtomed to amuſe himſelf with the ſilly declaimers on the degeneracy of the times. That pleaſing metaphor, " the evening of life," hath freſh beauty in its application to Harris: For his declining day was mild and placid as the ſummer evening. There is an anecdote in his philological enquiries, which, as it falls in with my preſent ſubject, I ſhall endeavour to relate, though, perhaps, I very imperfectly recollect it. Reading

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to an old gentleman of his acquaintance, a repreſentation of moral depravity, the author of Hermes was interrupted by the ſad apoſtrophe: "Alas! "it was not ſo formerly—our anceſtors were more "frugal, more temperate. There was, then, hoſ-"pitality without luxury. The faſhions were not ſo "extravagant! vices were not ſo daring! ſhame "and ſin went together! But now, as your hiſto-"rian tells us"—"Hold," (ſaid the veteran philoſopher) "you miſtake. The very hiſtory that I "have been reading to you, is that of your fore-"fathers. Tis a picture of the laſt age!"

TO come to a fair deciſion on the points before us, tis neceſſary to diſcharge all claſſical prejudices from the mind; and to guard againſt ill-humour and dejection, which are often obſervable in ſtudious men, though peculiarly incident to the aged. Moroſeneſs, diſreliſhing every thing around it, is too frequently created by a ſedentary life.

To excite the more able and learned to a liberal inveſtigation of it, I ſhall throw out a few hints on the ſubject in queſtion; with that freedom of ſentiment which deſpiſes not authority, but diſdains

ſubmiſſion

ſubmiſſion to the unexamined opinions of the greateſt, the wiſeſt and moſt reſpectable among men.

Firſt, then, I ſhall draw a compariſon between ancient and modern times, as to philology and ſcience.

Secondly, I ſhall compare the ancients and moderns, with reſpect to morality.

And, *laſtly*, contracting my views within the circle of my own country, I ſhall conſider, whether the learning and virtue of the preſent generation may be placed in competition with thoſe of our forefathers.

SECTION

SECTION II.

AMONG the controvertible aſſertions of Mr. Addiſon, there is one which ſhall be the ſubject of my preſent animadverſion; as it will ſerve to direct my enquiries into the comparative merit of the moderns and ancients, with regard to philology and ſcience.

" It is very remarkable (ſays Addiſon) that, " notwithſtanding we fall ſhort, at preſent, of the " ancients, in poetry, painting, oratory, hiſtory, " architecture, and all the noble arts and ſciences, " which depend more upon genius than expe- " rience, we exceed them as much in doggerel, " humour, burleſque, and all the trivial arts of " ridicule." To prove this random allegation, Dr. Warton hath written two ingenious papers in the Adventurer. As we are all agreed in the laſt point, I ſhall only advert to it occaſionally: But, the former part of the aſſertion I ſhall examine in its order—purſuing the ſteps of Addiſon and his admirer.

Our

Our critics very properly ſet out with poetry, as the higheſt ſpecies of compoſition. But Dr. Warton, I conceive, has miſtated the firſt queſtion, that reſpects the epic poets. Inſtead of oppoſing Taſſo, Arioſto, and Camoens to Homer and Virgil, he ſhould have placed the two Italians againſt Lucan and Silius, and the laſt modern againſt the Mantuan Bard. The " Jeruſalem Delivered," far exceeds the " Pharſalia," in propriety of deſign, and ſtyle, and manner. And to compare the one with the other, in regard to invention, would be abſurd; ſince the Pharſalia is but an hiſtorical narrative, and the Jeruſalem the beautiful product of a fertile imagination. The parts of theſe two poems, that chiefly depend on fancy, are the ſcenes of enchantment. But the magic of Taſſo hath a wildneſs and magnificence, to which the ſpells of Lucan are inſipid and unaffecting. This ſpecies of wildneſs runs through the whole of Arioſto. And who, that accompanies the fiery Italian in his flights, can, for a moment, look down on the creeping Silius, except it be to note the contraſt of enthuſiaſm and frigidity, of ſpirit and dulneſs?

The

The Luſiad, as preſented us to by Mr. Mickle, is, perhaps, the beſt epic of the three. But whether Italy or Portugal deſerve the palm, I do not heſitate to aſſert (diſmiſſing the lower epics of antiquity) that Virgil is inferior in genius, both to Taſſo and Camoens. As the Portugueſe Poet hath been, generally, ranked below the Italian, I will, in a few inſtances, compare him with the Bard of Mantua. It ſeems to be allowed, that the Eneid hath little originality to boaſt, in the general plan, the machinery, the characters, or the ſentiment. To inſiſt on either of theſe points would be needleſs; ſince our enlightened and liberal critics allow, that, having completed his twelve books by the aſſiſtance of Homer's forty-eight (together with much acceſſary help from other Greeks, and the old Roman Poets) Virgil is manifeſtly ſervile in his machinery, and unintereſting in his characters. Though, as to plan and ſentiment, we grant him propriety and juſtneſs, in theſe, as in other points, he is a copyiſt.

But, for Camoens, though he has ſome glaring faults, he hath, doubtleſs, many original beauties; both of which, indeed, ſpeak uncommon abilities. He is not correct like Virgil: But the

hand of cold and ſober judgment would have blotted out the novelties that ſurpriſe and delight us: Theſe are "ſublime infirmities," which will not bear the inquiſition of the critic. "The epic "poetry of Camoens, (ſays Voltaire) is a ſort of "poetry unheard of before." I allow it; but not to his diſhonor. The manners of the Luſiad are new and ſtriking. And as to imagery, the apparition, hovering athwart the fleet near the Cape of Good Hope, is ſo grand a fiction, that it would alone ſet Camoens above Virgil, in point of genius. And what are the Elyſian Fields to the Iſland of Venus!—Read the Luſiad in Mickle's tranſlation, and the Eneid in its native ſtrain: And, unleſs claſſical prejudices interpoſe, you will undoubtedly prefer Mickle; though it may appear ſtrange that the verſion of a modern poem ſhould outvie the original of the fineſt ancient epic. Such an eclipſe ſeems a phænomenon in literature: But the Luſiad, perhaps, is become brilliant by transfuſion.

However this may be (whether Portugal or England, or both united, claim the credit) the moderns have at leaſt produced one Epic Poem, for which ancient Rome can find no parallel in genius.

But

But how ſhall we approach the venerable Homer, from whoſe gigantic ſtatue all the race of Poets ſhrink away, like miſerable pigmies?—We dread not the majeſty of Homer. As the Luſian orange, tranſplanted to an Engliſh ſoil, hath rivalled the Virgilian laurel; a native plant that ſhoots into the heaven of heavens, ſhall aſpire far above the Mæonian. "Milton will not eaſily reſign his claim to "equality; if not to ſuperiority." Such is Warton's ſentence. But he is much miſtaken in aſcribing the reaſon ſolely to Milton's having copied from the Book of God. Were this the caſe, his Paradiſe Regained would be equal to his Paradiſe Loſt. The Pandemonium, the Great Gulf between Heaven and Hell, the Flight of Satan towards this World, the Garden of Eden, the Battles in Heaven, the Paintings of Sin and Death, are as truly Milton's own, as any deſcription or imperſonation, in the Odyſſey or Iliad, are the property of Homer. Of theſe, the ſcripture afforded the mere outline: Independently of ſcripture, Milton hath exceeded Homer, both in ſolemnity and variety of thought. And what are Homer's gods, but the popular divinities? Though enobled by his fancy, they are not his own creation. What are his fables, but

the fables of the times, a little embelliſhed or enriched? The Grecian mythology was the ſame to Homer, as the ſacred writings to Milton.

If we paſs to the drama, the Greeks will furniſh us, in tragedy, with only three good writers—Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. For the Romans, they produce not a ſingle tragedian worth our notice. To the Grecian triumvirate Dr. Warton hath oppoſed Shakſpeare, Corneille, and Racine. But Shakſpeare, (he ſays) is ſo eccentric, that we cannot try him by dramatic rules. This, however, is little to the purpoſe. The ſole queſtion is which of theſe writers hath ſuperior genius?—The deciſion, I ſuſpect, muſt be in favor of our own countryman; as in ſtrokes of nature and character, he confeſſedly excels his competitor Æſchylus. "In theſe points (ſays Warton) he "yields not to the Greeks." And do not theſe conſtitute the chief excellence of the drama?—The truth is, that Æſchylus borrowed much from his predeceſſors; though, on many occaſions, he thinks nobly for himſelf: Shakſpeare borrowed very little but from the archetype of nature; and even in his imitations he ſhews his independence.

Moreover,

Moreover, while Shakſpeare is ſometimes extravagantly bold; Æſchylus is incomprehenſibly obſcure.

Sophocles and Corneille are ſo oppoſite in their manner, that they cannot be compared, according to the rules of juſt criticiſm. I confeſs the plots of the former are more regular; but his characters are not more various. And I queſtion whether the moſt faulty play of Corneille, inflated as it may be by the bombaſt of ſentimental declamation, would not gratify every impartial reader, more than the Œdipus Tyrannus. The tender Racine bears ſome reſemblance to Euripides in Pathos: But he has more gentleneſs and courteſy than the Greek. There is a ſweetneſs in the diction of Euripides: And this I conceive is his chief praiſe.

To confeſs the truth, I have no reliſh for ancient tragedy. The introductory ſoliloquies of the Greek plays are always tedious. We are diſſatisfied, at our firſt ſetting out, with the appearance of the road we are to travel. The chorus, is, in every light, indefenſible. Is it not unnatural, in the higheſt degree, that the chorus ſhould be conſtant witneſſes of what is tranſacting, and yet ſeldom or never bear a part in the action?—Various deſigns

are

are formed in their hearing; the execution of which they attempt not to accelerate or retard. Would not the good ſenſe of an Engliſh audience turn with antipathy from ſuch abſurdities? Even as to the unity of time and place, the Greek plays are defective; though they ſeem, moſt of them, to have been written by receipt. This is particularly obſervable in the Alceſtis, Hippolytus, Rheſus, Iphigenia in Tauris, and the Suppliants of Euripides. What is called ſimplicity of fable in the Greek tragedy, is abſolutely a meagreneſs—a tenuity, that betrays a want of vigor—a defect in the powers of invention. I am no advocate however for the perplexing intricacies of our faſhionable plays.

Yet I would rather be loſt in the fertile mazes of the grove, than ſhiver amid the dreary nakedneſs of the waſte. The dramatic poems of Maſon, which are the moſt finiſhed pieces in our language, are very unlike the models they profeſs to imitate. Read them even in Glaſſe's Greek, and you will hardly diſcover a likeneſs. The intertexture of the Chorus in Elfrida and Caractacus, is almoſt unexceptionable; the ſentiments are refined and beautiful; the characters are diſcriminated; the ſituations are intereſting; the diction is rich and exuberant.

The

The legitimate tragedies of the modern ſtage, that have been imitated from Euripides, may be ſucceſsfully oppoſed to their prototypes. I am not afraid to hazard the aſſertion (becauſe on a fair compariſon it might eaſily be proved) that there is more ingenuity diſplayed in the Phædra and the Andromache of Racine, the Diſtreſt Mother of Philips, the Phædra and Hippolitus of Smith, and even the Creuſa of Whitehead, than in their Greek originals or outlines. But, laying aſide all ideas of imitation, I may venture to ſay, that an Athenian audience had never the pleaſure of attending ſuch intereſting repreſentations, as the Venice Preſerved of Otway, or the Jane Shore of Rowe.

Of comedy, and all the ſpecies of ridicule, our two critics very candily adjudge the prize to the moderns. Though Ariſtophanes and Plautus are both valuable, as preſerving the features of the times in which they wrote, yet their wit is vulgar ribaldry. Of Menander we may form ſome judgment from his Roman Tranſlator: But, even the delicacy of Terence muſt yield to the chaſte humour of Moliere. And, what is enough to exclude the polite African from our theatre, he wants

that

that fine reliſh which the critics call poignancy—very different, it ſhould ſeem, from the qualities of attic ſalt.

Our own Congreve hath a larger proportion of the comic ſpirit, than Moliere: And, as a ſingle character, the Falſtaff of Shakſpeare, (whether a brave man or a coward) will be ever deemed the firſt in comedy. For the ſatiriſts of antiquity, even Horace and Juvenal muſt fall before Boileau and Pope. But humour is our preſiding feature: We have a richer vein, alſo, of wit than the ancients. This is clearly owing to our advantage over them in all the arts of pleaſing—to that polite and eaſy converſation which was unknown to the Greeks and Romans.

In Painting, Dr. Warton ſeems to concede the palm to the moderns, from his exalted idea of the Italian ſchool: Here again we agree.

It is true, none of the Grecian paintings have come down to theſe latter ages. And Pliny, Quintilian, and Lucian have ſpoken of the Greek artiſts with admiration. But were theſe critics judges of picture? On examination, perhaps, we ſhould find, that they conſidered many perfor-

mances,

mances, which were at beſt but happy attempts in the infancy of the art, as deſerving the praiſe of excellence even on an abſtracted view of the compoſition. They ſpeak with rapture of pieces, which a modern connoiſſeur would have ſurveyed with indifference. The productions of Aglaophon and Polygnotus were rude unſeemly ſketches. Aglaophon had only the uſe of a ſingle color. But the Roman connoiſſeurs under the Emperors, ſet a greater value on thoſe ſketches, than on the paintings of Parrhaſius and Zeuxis; perhaps from an abſurd reverence for antiquity. The ſtory told of the conteſt between Zeuxis and Parrhaſius, may, poſſibly, be cited as an argument in favor of ancient painting. But the Birds pecking the grapes of Zeuxis, by no means prove that his grapes were well painted. Birds may be deceived by the moſt bungling repreſentations. Every ſchool-boy knows that he can impoſe a hen's eggs on a magpye; if he mark them in ſuch a manner as to produce the ſlighteſt reſemblance of her own. In this caſe, the ſchool-boy may rival the artiſt. The other ſtory of " the Boy carrying Grapes," painted by Zeuxis, will effectually ſilence all diſputes on the ſubject; unleſs thoſe, who are confuted, chuſe to

argue ſtill. The birds flew down (it is ſaid) to peck the fruit in the boy's hands. On which, (though ſilly people admired it the more) the Painter himſelf was juſtly enough diſſatisfied with his work. For (as he obſerved) had the boy been repreſented to the life, the birds would have been afraid to approach him. We are told, that on ſeeing the figure of a horſe, in a picture of Apelles, a real horſe neighed approbation. It was a picture, however, that Alexander had diſapproved. On which the painter affirmed, with more flippancy than truth, that a Horſe was a better judge of painting than Alexander. I would rather truſt to Alexander's judgment: For I doubt not but a ſign-poſt daubing of a horſe would have ſimilarly affected the ſame animal, in the ſame circumſtances.

When Zeuxis is himſelf deceived by the linen Curtain of Parrhaſius, we may a moment heſitate. But, taking this to be true, we all know how eaſily we are deluded by ſcenical repreſentation. From a preconceived idea that he was to ſee ſome extraordinary painting, he might have haſtily and eagerly deſired his competitor to draw aſide the curtain apparently concealing the picture: And this,

this, immediately on his entrance into the room, without giving himſelf time to examine the object before him. Beſides, the fictitious curtain might have been ſo placed in ſhade, as not to be inſtantly diſtinguiſhed with preciſion. Painters may be nicer judges than others, as to general reſemblance. But, to be ſenſible of an exact imitation, requires ſtudy: For a critique on particular parts, the original and the copy ſhould be viewed together. Of the moſt familiar objects we have no accurate recollection. As to the imitation of familiar objects, ſingly taken, we are all, perhaps, equal judges: I will not grant the ſuperiority to artiſts. The ſhoemaker detected the bad ſlipper: And a linen-draper would beſt have decided on the exact imitation of the linen-curtain.

But we can poorly depend on the narratives of ſuch credulous and fabling men, as Pliny or Ælian. Add to this, that the critics contradict one another moſt palpably. Zeuxis is cenſured by Ariſtotle for his want of character; whilſt Pliny praiſes him, for painting the very manners. The ancient Painters were ignorant of perſpective: But Lucian admires the art of Zeuxis in diſpoſing his lights and ſhadows. How great, then, would have been

Lucian's wonder, on viewing the Transfiguration of Raphael, or the Aurora of Guido?—Have we any deſcription of an ancient painting, that comes up to our idea of Paul preaching at Athens? Or, in reſpect to landſcapes, how would all Greece have gazed with admiration, on the ſweet ſcenery of a Claude Lorrain; or the wild majeſty of a Salvator Roſa?—Theſe enquiries are, indeed, ſuperfluous: For the ancients were ignorant, alſo, of oil-colors, which, according to Dr. Warton's own confeſſion, are happily calculated to blend and unite, without harſhneſs or diſcordance, to give a boldneſs and relief to the figures, and to form thoſe middle teints, which render every well-wrought piece a cloſer reſemblance of nature. Yet the moderns (it may be ſaid) have never produced ſuch ſtatues as the Hercules, the Laocoan, the Apollo de Belvidere, or the Venus de Medicis. True: But are we to preſume that the ancients were good painters, becauſe they were good ſtatuaries? They had evidently the means of producing ſtatues; though not of producing pictures. Whatever was their invention in the latter, their execution muſt have been neceſſarily defective. Among the moderns, particularly in this country, the art

of

of ſculpture is brought to great perfection. We have artiſts among us, who might almoſt preſume to emulate a Phidias or a Praxiteles. And it deſerves to be mentioned, that we boaſt a ſpecies of ſculpture unknown to the ancients—I mean the engraving on copper, by which the productions of the painter are multiplied, ſo as to become the ſubjects of general obſervation, amuſement and inſtruction; though, in former days, they were confined to the galleries of the rich.

But to cloſe our compariſon of ancient and modern picture, I ſcarcely think it poſſible that there were any paintings in the ποικιλη, ſo excellent as not to be ſurpaſſed by the Italian ſchool. And, for our own country, there are many who contend, that our exhibitions of hiſtory-painting in particular, (which is the nobleſt effort of the art) might be viewed in the ſame light with the beſt productions of ancient Greece or modern Italy.

Oratory comes next in review. But as I have already treated on eloquence in "The Engliſh Orator," I ſhall paſs over the ſubject in ſilence—referring my readers to the poem.

For

For Hiſtory, though I do not join Lord Bolingbroke in preferring Guicciardini to Thucydides; yet I think Clarendon may be placed above the Greek, as a more minute delineator of character, and a more accurate deſcriber of events that fell under his notice.

But the ſtyle of Thucydides is the true dignified ſtyle of an hiſtorian. Not ſo that of his predeceſſor Herodotus; who, unable to throw off either the ſtilts of poeſy, or the trammels of ſuperſtition, diſgraces hiſtory by the admiſſion of ſuch fabulous inventions, as are too marvellous even for vulgar credulity. Let it not, however, be ſuſpected, that I mean to decry the ancients, in order to exalt the moderns. I wiſh only to oppoſe illiberal prejudices. I venerate genius, wherever it exiſts. I read Xenophon and Cæſar with delight—I am charmed with their ſimplicity. But I can reliſh, with a higher ſatisfaction, the more beautiful ſimplicity of Lord Lyttleton. Nor do I doubt the judgment of thoſe critics, who think Davila more lively and enlightened than Livy, and Machiavel or Gibbon more refined and philoſophical than Tacitus.

It may be objected, that, after all, we are only imitators—at beſt improvers; and that we ſhould never have ariſen to ſuch eminence, but for the ancient models to aſſiſt us. On this ground, our ſuperiority, or, at leaſt, our equality is granted. We are not degenerated—we are not ſunk from the ancient level. It is my opinion, however, that we are far from being indebted to the ancients for our beſt performances; and that, if we had not been circumſcribed ſo early and ſo long within the bounds of their ideas, we ſhould have laboured more effectually in every path of fine writing. On any view, we have all the philological knowledge of antiquity, with a great deal of our own ſuper-added to it.

In Architecture (which is the laſt particular Mr. Addiſon hath mentioned) I confeſs the ancients were our ſuperiors. The Temple of Theſeus hath never been exceeded in magnificence; or the Lanthorn of Demoſthenes in elegance. And, while we admire the Theatre of Marcellus, uniting the majeſty of the Doric, with the gracefulneſs of the Ionic order, we join the poet in applauding "the ſimplicity and ſevere greatneſs" of the Pantheon.

The

The beautiful ſtructures, however, that were raiſed by a Michael Angelo, a Palladio, or an Inigo Jones, may almoſt diſpute the prize with the ancients. They have not the merit, 'tis true, of original deſign. But the beſt architecture of ancient Rome was borrowed from Greece. In invention, Italy was univerſally deficient. Though ſhe added two orders to thoſe of Greece, ſhe was meagre in the one, and in the other fantaſtical. The naked Tuſcan was a depravation of the Doric; and the crouded compoſite of the Corinthian. Perceiving the vain efforts of Rome, we have not added a ſixth column to architecture; but we have much improved it, in ſeveral particulars—more eſpecially in luminouſneſs.

In the temples of the ancients, there was a darkneſs and drearineſs, which the invention of glaſs hath totally removed from our buildings.

The free admiſſion of light through a ſubſtance that at the ſame inſtant excludes the inclemencies of the weather, contributes greatly to the comfort and convenience of our private houſes; which, in many other reſpects, are ſuperior to thoſe of ancient days. Whilſt, indeed, the public edifices of the ancients claim our veneration, their private habitations almoſt deſerve our contempt.

But

But the moderns have to boaſt a new ſpecies of building, independent on Grecian genius. The claſſic ſcholar may look down, perhaps, on Gothic Architecture: But, whatever may be objected to it, I dare aſſert, that unaſſiſted by the rules of antiquity, King's College Chapel is one of the moſt beautiful buildings in the world.

Thus far hath Mr. Addiſon ſpecified. But, "as to the noble arts and ſciences, which depend "more upon genius than experience;" I believe his ideas were rather indeterminate.

Tis remarkable enough, that he hath been ſilent on an art congenial with Poetry and Painting—a ſiſter-art, depending on the ſame principles of imitation. On the ſubject of Muſic, I ſuppoſe, he had his doubts. Whether the ſimple melody of the ancients could be any way equal, in compoſition or effect, to our complex harmony, might have been an ambiguous queſtion with Addiſon. But, though we have a varied harmony, we have by no means corrupted the melody; whoſe energy is thus increaſed, while its unity is ſtill preſerved. As ſoon as the inſtrumental muſic of the ancients was ſeparated from the voice, of which it was before an accompanyment, it began to loſe its

effects. In this ſtate, Plato thought it an abuſe of melody. And we cannot imagine that muſic to be very enchanting, which could not ſubſiſt without the combination of the voice and inſtrument. The great, the ſoul-entrancing effects of this divine art, are ſurely in inſtrumental muſic.

He, however, who hath attended the commemorations of Handel, may judge, whether all the energies of ancient muſic, (with yet the voice and inſtrument in union) could have been, any way, comparable to the rich-modulated ſounds of the full chorus?—And hath Greece exhibited, through all the revolutions of the muſical art, ſo many excellent vocal and inſtrumental performers, as were aſſembled, at one inſtant, in Weſtminſter-Abbey?

As to the ſciences, we have manifeſtly the advantage over the ancients; whether "they depend "on genius or experience." And, ſurely, there is a ſcientifical, as well as a philological genius. What were Mr. Addiſon's ſentiments of a Bacon and a Newton? Was it poſſible to bring forward any names, ſo illuſtrious, from antiquity?—Tis true, they proceeded, cautiouſly, on experiment. They purſued not, with a ſpirit that diſdained the laws of matter, the wild and daring theories of the

the ancients; aſcribing arbitrary properties to bodies—ſuch as beſt agreed with preconceived opinion, and ſuch as ſwelled the dignity of independent thought!—They referred not phænomena to imaginary cauſes, by the help of vague conjecture; but, treading on certain ground, diſcovered gradually the laws of nature, by experimental proceſſes.

To our manifold inventions and diſcoveries in phyſics and phyſiology, how little can be oppoſed, from claſſic times?

In phyſiology, the knowledge of plants and of minerals hath thrown a new luſtre on the healing art. Suppoſe we look, for a moment, to the ſtudy of medicine. As ſubſidiary to pharmacy, we now ſee the united powers of Botany and Chemiſtry—the former continually improving ſince the days of Hippocrates and Galen—the latter entirely unknown to the father of phyſic. I ſhall not go into the obſcure times of the Ægyptians, famed as they were for medical knowledge. The Greeks improved upon the Ægyptians. And the Greeks carried to great perfection the uſe of ſimples. But, from the writings of Hippocrates, we may judge of their higheſt attainments in Medicine. The

Coan ſage had, doubtleſs, a deep inſight into nature. And he has merit in deſcribing the ſymptoms of diſeaſes. But his preſcriptions are ſtrangely complicated: And, unleſs the Grecian conſtitution was very different from ours, his medicines muſt have been very inefficacious.

The Indies have ſince ſupplied us with ſeveral valuable ſimples; to which all the herbs of Hippocrates muſt yield. A long time intervened before Galen whoſe writings have ſunk into deſerved neglect.

And it does not appear that Celſus, who lived in the reign of Tiberius, ever practiſed phyſic. He deſcanted on the art, as a philoſopher.

In Chirurgery, the ancients have not the ſlighteſt pretenſion to a competition with us. Their loſs of ſuch multitudes in battle (a deſtruction unparrarelled in the annals of modern war) muſt chiefly be attributed to their unſkilful treatment of the wounded. They had no ſurgeons who knew the art of dreſſing a wound. The wounds which proved fatal to the heroes of Homer, (it hath been obſerved) would be mere ſcars to the ſoldiers of a modern army; or would be treated by beings leſs fallible

fallible than the godlike Machaon; though not always by the leaſt fallible of men.

Tis impoſſible that the ancients could have directed their ſurgical operations aright, or underſtood the internal affections of the body; ſince they knew nothing of anatomy. The Ægyptians were ſkilled in embowelling; but not in anatomizing. And, had the Greeks been acquainted with anatomy, Hippocrates would not have been ſilent on the ſubject. On being ſurprized by the Phyſician in the act of diſſecting a beaſt, Democritus thought proper to explain the occaſion of it, and apologize for ſo revolting a ſingularity. Queſtioned by Hippocrates on the ſubject, he replied: "Hæc "animalia quæ vides propterea ſeco, non Dei "opera peroſus, ſed fellis biliſque naturam re-"quirens." This is a remarkable circumſtance. We not only obſerve the ignorance of Hippocrates, (for had he been acquainted with anatomy, he would ſcarcely have queſtioned Democritus on the ſubject) but we admire alſo the curious inquiſitiveneſs of the philoſopher prevailing over the abſurd ſuperſtition of his countrymen, who were ready, it ſeems, to aſcribe even the diſſection of a beaſt to a contempt or hatred of the works of God.

Surely,

Surely, then, the Greeks would have not preſumed to diſſect the bodies of men. We cannot find, that, even in Galen's time, anatomy was practiſed. And the Romans held it unlawful (as Pliny tells us) even "aſpicere humana exta." Tiberius was allowed to touch (as Dion ſays) the body of Auguſtus—"quod nefas alias eſſet."

In the darker ages immediately following, we can hardly imagine the exiſtence of the art. Tertullian inveighs againſt Herophilus, who practiſed anatomy; doubting, whether he deſerved the name of a phyſician or a butcher. St. Auguſtine entertained the ſame opinion of anatomy: And Pope Boniface threatened to excommunicate all ſuch as ſhould attempt it. I need not add to the length of this diſcuſſion, by adverting to our modern practitioners, who doubtleſs purſue the art with ingenuity and zeal. Harvey led the way: and numerous hath been the tribe of his followers, who have done honor to the profeſſion.

That medicine never arrived at any great eminence among the ancients, we need not wonder; ſince they paid little reſpect to profeſſional men. Certain it is, that, among the Romans, the practice of phyſic was chiefly in the hands of ſlaves.

During

During the reign of Auguſtus, we hear of no other reſpectable phyſician but Antonius Muſa. The Romans had no phyſician of conſpicuous abilities. They could not boaſt ſuch men, as a Friend, a Radcliffe, or a Sydenham—men " of genius as " well as experience."

I have already entered into ſo many particulars, in this compariſon of the ancients and moderns, that it would be ſwelling this diſquiſition to an immoderate length, to ſpecify more.

Hitherto, I have had, for the moſt part, Mr. Addiſon and Dr. Warton for my guides; but they have now deſerted me.

ON a general view of literature, it may well be concluded, that philology and ſcience have not only produced in this country, and many others enjoying the ſame degree of civilization, ſuperiors to our predeceſſors the ancients; but (owing to ſuch an intercourſe of nations as was unknown to antiquity) ſome ſhare of the literature we poſſeſs, with a wonderful variety of artificial and ſcientific diſcoveries or improvements, hath been extended to very diſtant regions, and diffuſed among the great maſs of mankind.

The

The Auguſtan age, when all the world was at peace, and at leiſure for the cultivation of learning and the arts, and when the Roman arms had opened ſo general a communication, muſt ſhrink into eclipſe, if compared with the illumination of the preſent century; though we throw into ſhadow the great continent of America, now cultivating the language, and emulating the literature of England; though we bring not into view the remoter Indies, now catching the reflexion of the liberal arts, under the auſpices of a Jones.

This intercourſe of nations depends on an art in which the ancients were confeſſedly unſkilled—the art of Navigation.

How the Phœnicians could have reached this iſland without the aſſiſtance of the Mariner's compaſs, is truly wonderful. We are ſure that the ancients in general could perform only coaſting voyages. Their ideas of a voyage are ſufficiently clear, from the immenſe oceans circumnavigated by the wandering Ulyſſes or Æneas!—Novices as they were in navigation, they neceſſarily conceived a faint and ſometimes miſtaken idea of the countries which they could not accurately ſurvey.

Look into their Mela, and mark their ignorance of Geography. They knew not that the earth was ſurrounded by ſea: They thought the torrid zones were uninhabitable. Of the remoter parts of Aſia, of India beyond the Ganges, and of China, their notions were very imperfect. And ſo little were they acquainted with what was tranſacting in the world, that it will admit of a doubt, whether Herodotus or Thucydides had ever heard the name of the Romans—though a very formidable people in the time of theſe hiſtorians.

But the preſent commercial intercourſe of nations does not entirely account for ſo rapid a communication of every ſpecies of knowledge as is now obſervable in modern Europe.

Had we no other general advantage over antiquity than what we derive from navigation, our diſcoveries and improvements would not be ſo eaſily ſpread through the maſs of wide-extended communities.

Tis to the art of Printing that we owe the quick circulation of every thing valuable amongſt us. The Romans approached to the very verge of this invention. That they miſſed it, is ſurpriſing; ſince the Cæſars were accuſtomed to impreſs their

whole names on grants or letters; and even ſhepherds uſed to mark their names on cattle. Virgil ſays, that the Hind

Aut pecori ſignum, aut numeros impreſſit acervis.

And Calphurnius ſtill more plainly:

Impreſſurus ovi tua nomina.

The honor of the invention, however, is due to the moderns. And its extenſive influence in literature is too generally felt, to require proof. Every ſociety, even the loweſt members of it, now enjoy, in conſequence of the art of Printing, many priveleges and many conveniencies, which were formerly circumſcribed within a very narrow compaſs; being confined to the learned or the great.

Such a revolution has Printing occaſioned in the republic of letters, that probably we ſhall never again relapſe into barbariſm. A barrier againſt ignorance is now fixed, which nothing, perhaps, will be able to demoliſh. All the knowledge of our forefathers, which we at preſent poſſeſs, as repoſited in the books tranſmitted to us from ancient times, we have the power of ſecuring to ourſelves and to poſterity. Such is the infinite multiplication of copies, that compoſitions which are once made public, may be, for ever, circulated; and,

continually

continually re-edited in freſh impreſſions, may mock even the power of time itſelf—may brave all the artifices of deſtruction. We might almoſt imagine, that Ovid had written theſe triumphant lines, with a prophetic view to this glorious invention.

Jamque opus exegi, quod nec Jovis ira nec ignis,
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetuſtas.
——— Nomenque erit indelebile noſtrum;
Quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
Ore legar populi! &c.

Theſe confident hopes, apparently ſo romantic, could only, perhaps, be realized by Printing.

Whilſt, then, we poſſeſs an art ſo univerſally uſeful, let us be ſenſible of its real value; and take care not to debaſe it, by rendering it the vehicle of frivolity or corruption.

Let us turn it to the purpoſes of genuine ſcience; and rejoice in our opportunities unpoſſeſt by former times, of diſſeminating our knowledge and our virtue.

SECTION III.

I Have already ſhewn our equality, at leaſt, with the ancients, in reſpect to Philology and Science. Nor will it be leſs eaſy to prove, that we are not degenerated from the ancient ſtandard of morality. In both points, indeed, I would maintain our ſuperiority over former times. All, however, I flatter myſelf, will, at length, concur with me in opinion, that the complaint of our degeneracy is unfounded and weak.

If we look to the vices of former times, they will appear, as I take it, more enormous, if not more general, than the vices of theſe latter days.

I ſhall not go back to the infancy of the world for a view of large and populous cities, where ſcarcely any righteous perſons were to be found: I ſhall not mark them abandoned to the moſt unnatural crimes, and drawing down deſtruction from on high. Were we only to glance over the hiſtory of the Jews, a race ſelected from the nations

tions as God's peculiar people, we ſhould be ſufficiently ſhocked by every ſpecies of barbarity and profligacy. Though under the immediate direction of God, they were incredulous, obſtinate, and cruel. They were repeatedly guilty of inceſt, of fratricide, of parricide: And in their puniſhments (ſuch as ſawing men aſunder) they betrayed a moſt brutal diſpoſition.

The cruelties of the Jews are hardly equalled by the inhumanity of the thirty Athenian tyrants, who, having ſlain a vaſt number of citizens, obliged the daughters of the murdered, to dance in the blood of their parents.

Nor are the Jewiſh people exceeded by the moderns in extravagance. It is well known, that the Iſraelitiſh Ladies were accuſtomed to powder their hair with gold duſt.

We find many of the Romans committing the moſt ſavage outrages. Even to revenge a trivial jeſt, Antoninus Caracalla put all the citizens of Alexandria to the ſword, and razed the city to the ground.

The Romans, in many inſtances, combined the deepeſt treachery with all the wantonneſs of cruelty.

elty. The *punica fides* might well be retorted on themſelves. The perfidy of Servius Galba, who aſſembling together the inhabitants of three cities in Spain, under the pretence of conſulting their common ſafety, cut off ſeven thouſand at a ſtroke; or of Licinius Lucullus, who, in violation of expreſs articles, maſſacred twenty thouſand of the Caucæi, can ſcarce be paralleled in modern times. The mild Auguſtus himſelf was guilty of the greateſt enormities. It is well known, that on taking the city of Peruſium, he offered up as a ſacrifice to the manes of his uncle Julius, three hundred of the principal citizens. Have we ever had occaſion to execrate ſuch living characters, as thoſe of Nero or Domitian? Are not the ten perſecutions ſo pregnant with barbarity, that the hiſtory of them ſeems incredible to the moderns?

If ſuch then were the cruelties of the Greeks and Romans, muſt not imagination recoil from the immanity of the nations around them? How can we form an adequate idea of thoſe, whom the Greeks and Romans ſtiled Barbarians?—On a general view of their morality, the Barbarians were not more barbarous. The beſtiality of the German

Women,

Women, in throwing their infants at the faces of the Roman ſoldiers, to damp the ardor of ambition and of victory, by the moſt terrifying ſpectacles inhumanity could exhibit, is even more defenſible than the outrages I have already mentioned.

As to other vices, that characterized theſe two politer people, the licentious communication of the ſexes, we know, was pretty generally countenanced.

The crimes of Sodom was openly avowed in Greece: And an exceſs of drinking was ſo frequent there, that *pergræcari* implied the frenzy of drunkenneſs. We are told (though tis hardly to be credited) that Cyrus, preparing to attack his brother Artaxerxes, publiſhed a manifeſto, in which he aſſerted his ſuperior claim to the throne of Perſia, becauſe he could ſwallow the moſt wine. Is it poſſible, that ſo ſhameleſs a manifeſto could be publiſhed by a modern Prince?

For theſe vices, the Roman people, alſo, were notorious—*ad diurnam ſtellam matutinam potantes*, from Plautus to Seneca; the latter of whom affirmed, that the women even exceeded the men.

With

With reſpect to the prodigality and luxury of the ancients, we have numerous inſtances unequalled by our wildeſt exceſſes—our moſt delicate refinements in voluptuouſneſs. We are told by Plutarch, that Alexander ſpent twelve millions of talents upon the funeral of Hephæſtion. And, for the extravagance of the Emperor Heliogabalus, what Prince on earth can now pretend to rival him?—Hiſtorians inform us, that, while his fiſh-ponds were filled with roſe-water, his lamps furniſhed with the balſam that diſtills from the Arabian groves—his dining-room ſtrewed with ſaffron, and his porticoes with gold-duſt, he had every day new veſtments of the richeſt ſilk, or woven gold!

If it be ſaid, that though not ſo extravagant, we are yet more voluptuous than the ancients, I would only look to the Roman luxuries at Baiæ to obviate ſo frivolous an objection.

There are ſome, who may pretend, that I have been all this while collecting a few vices, as they are thinly ſcattered over the face of the ancient world—that I have been unfairly bringing into view the more prominent irregularities of men, to the degradation of the ſpecies, and to the confu-

ſion

ſion of hiſtorical truth. But this I deny. I have brought forward the vices that have characterized whole ages and nations. The beſt ages of Greece and Rome will ſhrink from a compariſon with modern times.

In Greece, the common people were ſubjected to ſuch a legiſlation and ſuch a religion, that their brighteſt morals were ſtained with impurities. The applauded virtues of the Spartan common-wealth, are blended with glaring imperfection. The laws of Lycurgus, ſo repeatedly the theme of oratorical panegyrick, are little elſe than a maſs of corruption. They are founded in falſe and vicious principles. They hold forth abſurdities, which would ſhock the good ſenſe of a modern legiſlator. Among a variety of other barbarities, they directed the expoſure, and conſequently, the deſtruction of ſuch children as were born too delicate or weak, for the military functions of a Spartan. The Spartans in fact were ſoldiers, not men. Their lawgiver ſeems to have viewed the one as contradiſtinguiſhed from the other; ſince in the warlike character, which conſiſted in triumphing over the tenderneſs of nature, and confronting death with ſavage reſolution, he hath ſunk all the virtues and

affections of humanity. From the cultivation of the gentler paſſions he was ſo utterly averſe, that he baniſhed all the humanizing arts; leſt they ſhould ſoften the boſom into benevolence, or excite the ſocial ſympathies, or kindle thoſe charities of father, ſon, and brother, which he diligently laboured to extinguiſh. Hoſtile, indeed, to every ſpecies of mental improvement, he ſuffered no form of literature to exiſt among his ſubjects. To render the body robuſt and active, to the extinction almoſt of the mind, was the ſole object of the Spartan legiſlator.

The boys, therefore, were taken away, at a very early age, from their parents; and inured, under the care of the ſtate, to hardſhips, and difficulties, and dangers. They were taught to bear the ſevereſt extremities of heat and cold, hunger and thirſt, with patience and tranquility. And, merely with a view of exerciſing or hardening their bodies, they were often beat in ſo mercileſs a manner, that they expired under the whip: And (what wonderfully proves the force of habit) they have been known, in ſuch ſituations, to expire without a groan. Thus, then, all natural affection between parents and children was deſtroyed or precluded;

and

and the direſt ferocity planted in its place. It ſeems, indeed, that parents felt ſome intereſt in the fate of their offspring: For Spartan mothers have been applauded for their firmneſs and magnanimity whilſt they rejoiced over their children ſlain in battle, and pointed with triumph to the mangled bodies. To teach them the cunning and artifice which they might have occaſion to practiſe againſt the enemy, the Spartans were countenanced by the legiſlator in thievery. The beſt thieves were the beſt ſubjects. The Spartan, indeed, is only to be contemplated in the camp. Eſtranged from all the virtues and comforts of domeſtic life, he could ſcarcely boaſt the fidelity or attachment of a female, to ſoften his military cares! The women of Lacedæmon had neither gentleneſs nor modeſty, nor ſenſe of ſhame. Such, then, was Sparta: Cruelty and cunning were her cardinal virtues. Yet the claſſic ſcholar looks back on Sparta, with admiration.

The other celebrated city of Greece hath a higher claim to our notice. The virtues of Athens were not ſo ambiguous or ſo revolting. But the Athenians ſeem to have been as ſtrangely addicted to ſuperſtition as the Spartans were to war. They

devoted half their time to the worſhip of the Gods: And the homage that ſo occupied their attention, was moſt abſurd and ridiculous. This, however, is the leaſt exceptionable part of a religion, which, by holding forth the moſt flagrant examples of immorality in the perſon of the Gods, by exacting a vaſt variety of ſhocking and indecent ceremonies, and by enforcing the practice of obſcenities under the cover of myſtery, muſt have tinctured with impure notions the beſt-diſpoſed minds, and have depraved the moral conduct, in almoſt every ſituation: Where a popular religion enjoins the practice of vice, the vulgar muſt be neceſſarily vicious. And, for the philoſophers, could they diſſipate from their boſoms the early and familiar prejudices of the only religion which they knew? No ſchoolboy, I ſuppoſe, needs be informed, that the wiſe and virtuous Socrates (for ſuch hath he been called) was weak enough to ſacrifice a cock to Æſculapius. Nor is it to be diſſembled, that this virtuous man was, probably, guilty of pæderaſty —a crime indiſputably ſanctioned by moſt of the ſages and poets of Athens.

The influence of polite literature on the morals, is certainly viſible in every community: And the

ſages

ſages and poets of Athens were, generally, her beſt moral men. Theſe, however, were comparatively few. The great body of the people was a contaminated maſs.

Poliſhed, as Athens is ſaid to have been, ſhe was very deficient in that pure refinement which includes chaſtity and delicacy. There is one circumſtance ſufficiently proves it. Her Courtezans were her only women of education. They were abſolutely the only women who were eaſily approachable by the other ſex, who appeared at public places, who adorned and enlivened ſociety by their polite addreſs, and ſparkling converſation, who preſided over the faſhions and influenced the manners. With ſuch our Socrates himſelf converſed: With ſuch only he could relax the ſtern features of philoſophy. He had his ſweet Xantippe, indeed, at home: But, affable as ſhe was, I am rather inclined to think that he had no great diſreliſh to an evening-lounge with Thais; though the converſation of the latter might be diſadvantageouſly oppoſed to that of his ſoft inſinuating conſort!—The virtuous women of Athens, in truth, were ſo miſerably degraded, that they were rendered incapable of the ſweet communion

of

of ſoul with ſoul. Uneducated, groſsly ignorant, ſhut up from ſociety, they were treated as ſlaves, and expected to perform the meaneſt offices. They had no room to exert their native ſenſibility. They had no ideas to communicate: And, if they had, there was no congenial boſom near, to cheriſh or enliven ſentiment, by friendly approbation, and ſympathetic affection!

From this ſituation of the Athenian women, we can form no very exalted idea of Athens itſelf. Tis an undoubted fact, that the domeſtic circle, in which the feminine virtues diffuſe their ſweetneſs, is the fineſt nurſery of national morality.

The Romans ſeem to have blended the ſternneſs of Spartan fortitude with the groſſneſs of Athenian ſuperſtition. It is true, they have plumed themſelves on illuſtrious inſtances of courage, frugality, and temperance; but theſe virtues apparently originated in conſtitutional auſterity; in a haughtineſs without dignity—a faſtidiouſneſs without ſentiment. Even at the end of the ſecond Punic war, the Romans had not a ſingle poet, hiſtorian, or philoſopher!—We may well, therefore, preſume, that their diſtinguiſhed virtues were not the effect of mental cultivation.

This,

This, indeed, is plainly evinced by the ſuperſtition that accompanied their ſimplicity. To the Gods of Greece, the people of Rome added innumerable deities. They ſubmitted their moſt weighty affairs to the caſual determination of omens. To this imaginary ſtandard of truth, all matters, whether trivial or important, were invariably referred.

Such was the genius of Rome, under her Kings and her Conſuls: And the ſteady ſupercilioufneſs, that diſtinguiſhed the Patrician blood, broke out among the populace in tumult and rebellion. It was politic in Cato to expel the philoſophers from Rome. I almoſt ſuſpect, that he had a ſufficient inſight into the national character, to dread the effects of polite literature on his countrymen.

Auſtere (as I obſerved) from conſtitution, the Romans were unable to cultivate the ſofter virtues, without ſinking into effeminacy. During the republican government, it was a natural pride—a loftineſs of ſpirit—an intolerance that brooked not controul, which created the patriot and the warrior. Under the Emperor theſe conſtitutional ſtamina were gradually enfeebled and deſtroyed. Literature was not compatible with bravery; nor

affluence

affluence with ſobriety. Horace was a coward; and moſt of his ſuperiors were ſenſualiſts—

Epicuri de grege porci.

The Roman women were beings of a higher order than the Athenian: But they were under too much reſtraint to contribute very largely to the pleaſures of converſation. And the voluptuouſneſs of looſer females was ſo generally attractive, that few charms were diſcoverable in the timid eye of meekneſs, or the bluſhing cheek of modeſty. Even Cato himſelf ſaw no indecorum in fornication. And 'tis ſaid, that he had no objection to lend his wife, occaſionally, to an acquaintance.

Theſe may ſeem harſh traits of the ancients: But they are juſtified by hiſtory.

I need not enter into an inveſtigation of modern manners. Survey at large the European nations. Look into the general morals of the more refined; and ſay, whether, amidſt all their vices, they are not viſibly characterized by a decorum and regularity, a gentleneſs and courteſy, that never marked the communities, whoſe outline I have drawn?—'Tis to the lower orders (who compoſe the greater part of the human race) that I would confine, for a moment, our attention.

The

The lower orders, then, it muſt be owned, underſtand the relative and the ſocial duties much more perfectly than ever the populace of Greece and Rome underſtood them. And we may preſume, though practice ſeldom keeps pace with knowledge, that they are, alſo, ſuperior to their predeceſſors, in their general morals: For what is known and acknowledged is more likely to be performed, than what is concealed or but imperfectly apprehended. If this be a true repreſentation of the vulgar in theſe days, to what is their ſuperiority to be attributed? To no other cauſe, I ſhould imagine, than an improved education. Their having been accuſtomed to better inſtruction, muſt, at leaſt, be the principal reaſon of this ſuperiority. On looking back to the heathen multitudes, we ſhould find that they were never inſtructed at all. Philoſophers might improve their own morality, by a practical application of the truths they diſcovered, to themſelves; but I never heard that they attempted to enlighten the lower orders of people, or explain to them, either at ſtated times, or on particular occaſions, their duty towards God or towards man. The heathen who were able to reaſon, attended more to ſpeculative

than practical points of morality; and they who were not, might wander after their own imaginations, with nothing to reſtrain them from criminality, but the terror of thoſe laws which reached not the private receſſes of life.

The common people in our days, however, are univerſally inſtructed in every thing which it is neceſſary for them to know. They are acquainted with their relation to their Creator and their fellow-creatures. They are taught by appointed teachers, who *doubt* not, like the Grecian ſages, but have a clear perception of their duty: And they are taught at ſtated times, when the whole enlightened world ſuſpends, in the ſame moment, every earthly labor, and turns, with one ſolemn pauſe, to heavenly meditation!

This great revolution, then, in the morals of mankind, was plainly effected by chriſtianity. Paganiſm had tinctured the morals with its own peculiarities: Chriſtianity hath done the ſame. The one was corrupt and diſguſtful: The other is pure and beautiful. The one had encouraged ferocity; had cheriſhed every vicious deſire: the other rejoices in candor, love, and innocence.

That

That the firſt converts to our holy religion were diſtinguiſhed from the pagans by the purity of their morals, and the dignity of their lives, even heathen writers themſelves inform us. Of this we have a remarkable account in the epiſtles of Pliny.

During the calamities, alſo, that were ſuffered under the Emperor Gallienus, there was a vaſt difference in the behavior of the Chriſtians and the Heathen. The former ſubmitted with a calm reſignation to the evils, which they could not eſcape; yet, feeling for all around them, endeavoured to relieve, as much as poſſible, the diſtreſſes of their fellow-creatures. The latter wildly abandoned their friends, to ſerve themſelves, and diſcovered nothing but ſelfiſhneſs, impiety, and deſpair.

He, who carefully peruſes the annals of the church, muſt own, I think, that, ever ſince the fall of the Roman Empire, our religion hath been gradually producing on mankind a better morality. The ſpirit of benevolence, which, at this moment, characterizes chriſtian nations, is abſolutely new in the hiſtory of man.

It was remarked by Bardiſanes, that Chriſtianity had retained the good, and rejected the vicious qualities of the ſeveral countries, where it firſt

began to gain ground. "In Parthia (ſays he) the Chriſtians, though Parthians, are not Polygamyſts; nor in Perſia, though Perſians, do they marry their own daughters. In Bactria and Gaul, they do not violate the marriage-bed: And, wherever they reſide, they reſiſt the influence of corrupt laws and wicked cuſtoms."

In the ſame manner, hath Chriſtianity been exerting itſelf, ſince the days of the Syrian Heretic.

It was then acting on the morals of a few, diſperſed through various countries: It now acts on the morality of whole communities, as the national religion.

If the people be ſavage, where it is received, it ſoothes their boiſterous ſpirit into gentleneſs, and dignifies their ſimplicity.

If the people be refined, it prevents unmanly ſoftneſs, and ripens their benevolence.

Perhaps, on a general view of the world, we ſhould be diſpoſed to think, that never before, ſo many countries met together, at the point of a happy civilization.

Whilſt Chriſtianity, therefore, precludes their relapſe into barbarity, it will probably continue to extend its Empire over other countries, till, at length, the whole world be one enlightened people.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

I Shall now contract the circle of my enquiries within the limits of my own country, and touch on the literature and morality of the preſent age as compared with thoſe of former ages. I ſhall content myſelf, however, with a very few remarks, as the ſubject of compariſon hath already, perhaps, exhauſted attention.

On looking back to the learning of our anceſtors, the ſplendid periods of our two Queens, Elizabeth and Anne, particularly attract our notice.

I have not unfrequently heard it remarked (though chiefly by the ſuperficial or the auſtere) that we have no pretenſions to the learning of Elizabeth's time, or the elegance of Queen Anne's. This obſervation on the depth of erudition in the firſt Auguſtan period (for ſuch has it been termed) is, partly, owing to a miſtaken notion, that all people of education were little leſs familiar with the Greek and Latin, than the Queen herſelf.

Elizabeth,

Elizabeth, no doubt, had cultivated an acquaintance with the claſſics. From the paucity of publications in her vernacular tongue, ſhe had neceſſarily recourſe to books, in other languages. But I much queſtion, whether ſhe could have read Greek with a boy of the firſt form in Weſtminſter-School.

We ſhould, alſo, take this along with us, that the age of Elizabeth was, in every thing, an affected age. And, where affectation prevails, the fair ſex are always ſtrongly tinctured by it. A little learning may be ſwelled to an enormous ſize by artifice, oſtentation, and pedantry. Hence, perhaps, that wonderful diſplay of erudition in another female perſonage. Roger Aſcham tells us, that going to wait on Lady Jane Grey, at her father's houſe in Leiceſterſhire, he found her reading Plato's Works in the Greek, whilſt the reſt of the family were hunting in the park. He ſeemed ſurprized—but ſhe aſſured him, that Plato was her higheſt amuſement. Poſſibly, the lady had no objection to be interrupted in her ſtudies: *She* was hunting for applauſe. But I have no wiſh to detract from the merit of theſe illuſtrious females. I will join iſſue with their panegyriſts—I will do homage

homage to their ſcholarſhip, and their talents: Yet, in juſt vindication of our own times, I will venture to oppoſe to them a Carter or a Montague.

In Elizabeth's reign, the ſuperior orders can hardly be ſaid to have been illiterate, if a mere acquaintance with words conſtitute the ſcholar: But they were miſerably deficient in many points of uſeful knowledge. In thoſe times, when the great body of the people are groſsly ignorant, but when ſcience is beginning to ſhed her luſtre on a few, the Clergy are generally obſerved to catch the firſt illumination.

The Clergy, however, in "Eliza's golden days," were irradiated by a ſpecies of light, which generated obſcurity. Diſtracted by the jargon of ſcholaſtic ambiguities, the prieſts of Elizabeth were ſkilled in ſuch argumentation, as never produced conviction in themſelves or others. Their ſophiſtry was worſe than ignorance. "For the ſoul to be without knowledge is not good," ſaith Solomon: But I would rather acquieſce in dreary emptineſs, than fill my mind with logical barbarities. Deſpiſing their mother tongue, they were accuſtomed to addreſs the people in Latin; though, however faſhionable latin ſermons might have been, they

muſt

muſt have ſeen the abſurdity of preaching in a language which few of their audience underſtood. An Engliſh ſermon, indeed, ſtuffed with all the terms in theology, muſt have been, almoſt, as unintelligible.

For the information of the common people, the bible was tranſlated into Engliſh. But, as the common people were unable to read Engliſh, they could not, even now, approach the ſcriptures.—There followed, therefore, a pretty general inſtitution of reading-ſeminaries.

The authors, who diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this reign, were men of great abilities: but they were—*rari nantes in gurgite vaſto.* At ſuch a ſeaſon, true genius and learning always ſhine tranſcendently, contraſted as they muſt be with the general darkneſs. I was going to add, that men of ingenuity are encouraged to exert their utmoſt powers, by the applauſes of an age which cannot reſtrain its admiration: but the praiſes of the ignorant neither ſoothe nor ſtimulate. The Hiſtory of Sir Walter Raleigh muſt place him high in our eſteem, when we conſider the barbarous language with which he ſtruggled. "The Eccleſiaſtical Polity" of Hooker, who was ſuperior to the pedantry of the

the times, is worthy the preſent age, for its liberal and manly ſentiment. And few have dared contend with a Verulam or a Shakſpeare.

But letters were not, generally, cultivated.—Shakſpeare himſelf was illiterate.

In the reign of our other Queen, the learned languages were taught with a view to real knowledge; though the acquiſition of Greek or Latin, in former reigns, was little elſe than the acquiſition of words.

And our own language was much enriched and poliſhed. The productions, however, of writers, in general, had no claim to elegance. Few were in poſſeſſion of a correct taſte. Clarke was a deep Theologian: but he was phlegmatic and dull.—Shafteſbury dazzles with a falſe brilliancy of ſtyle: Berkeley puzzles by his ſubtleties. In the mean time, Locke and Newton may be gazed at with wonder; though the reputation of the former ſeems to be gradually declining. In poetry, we ſee a cluſter of pleaſing writers. And Pope and Addiſon are mentioned as the moſt conſpicuous. But Pope is not original: and Addiſon is no longer regarded as a poet; tho' he will ever be eſteemed as a moraliſt. In his proſe-eſſays, indeed, a late

ingenious critic hath diſcovered a want of preciſion. Grammatical accuracy and exactneſs of expreſſion were reſerved for a Lowth and a Harris.

But to proceed, in this manner, would be endleſs. I purpoſed only a ſketch of our beſt ages, in order to awaken the memories of thoſe, who might be willing to decide on the queſtion, whether this preſent race hath any marks of degeneracy from the learning or the virtue of their forefathers.

If I am not miſtaken, it already appears, that the Engliſh nation hath made a gradual progreſs in literature, from the time of Elizabeth to that of Anne. Indeed, even our moroſe declaimers have allowed, that Queen Anne's was properly the Auguſtan age of this country. The ſtreams of knowledge were deep and clear, and yet diffuſed.

At this moment, literature is ſtill more extenſively ſpread abroad: But "'tis grown ſhallow, it ſeems, in proportion to its diffuſion."

There is a want of candor and of reflexion in this trite remark. The analogy of the ſtream will no longer hold good. Is it not ridiculous to ſay, that, becauſe we may have five hundred literary men amongſt us, each individual is leſs learned, than if we had only half the number? Or, that none,

none, in ſuch a number, are deep, becauſe many are ſuperficial? The contrary poſition would be much more rational. I ſhould rather ſuppoſe, that the prize of learning would be contended for, with ſtronger emulation, on account of the numerous competitors. At ſuch a criſis as this, when there are ſo many men of ability, it muſt require very great talents to be diſtinguiſhed above the reſt. For a clearer illuſtration of this, let us look only to the preſent ſtate of poetry.

More than a third part of thoſe who have had a claſſical education, can now write tolerable verſe. Thoſe of our Wickhamiſts are ſuperior, in verſification, to the beſt poets under Queen Anne, if we except Pope and Parnell.

Among the choir of poets, therefore, who charm us with their mingled melodies, that bard muſt poſſeſs peculiar ſweetneſs, to attract our chief attention to himſelf. Among the multitude, who riſe far above mediocrity, it muſt require exalted talents, to be greatly diſtinguiſhed.

The ſame obſervation may be applied to other ſpecies of literature. He, whoſe acquirements are now no more than common, would, formerly, have been regarded as a deep ſcholar, and would

not have been overlooked in a crowd of literati. Perhaps we have, at this juncture, as many writers, as there were readers in the age of Elizabeth. And, while the greater part of the community have minds improved and cultivated into elegance, our poetry is muſical and rich; our hiſtory is luminous and elaborate; our philoſophy is enlarged and liberal; and our theology is ſimple and pure. And, it may, I think, be juſtly obſerved: "So "diſtinguiſhed an age hath never before exiſted, "when he, who was educated under the WARTONS "at Wincheſter and at Oxford, might converſe on "poetry with a HAYLEY or a MASON; on divinity "with a HURD or a PORTEUS; on morals with a "JOHNSON; on hiſtory with a GIBBON or a RO-"BERTSON; on antiquities with a GOUGH or a "WHITAKER; on anatomy with a SHELDON;* and, "after having viewed the galleries of a REYNOLDS, "might repair to the theatre of a SIDDONS."

On the remaining topic I have very little to ſay, in addition to what hath already occurred.

We have ſeen the great body of the people much enlightened, ſince Elizabeth. They have been provided with better inſtructors. They have been more generally taught.

Under

* Now reſident at Exeter.

Under our firſt Queen, the ſuperior orders were marked by the ſame tyrannical and haughty diſpoſition, the ſame cunning and artifice, as characterized herſelf. The old baronial extravagance, ſtill coloured with ferocity, was the commanding feature of the nobles. The luxury of our own times is far exceeded by the pomp and prodigality of the baron, who, though he rioted among his vaſſals, yet breathed the fierce ſpirit of deſpotiſm.

In their treatment of the fair ſex, our forefathers were harſh and cruel. They are ſaid to have been all Knight-Errants; but they were only gallants and lovers in maſquerade. Notwithſtanding the romantic character they aſſumed, they really treated and conſidered the women as ſo many irrational beings. In one reign, females in particular were prohibited, by law, from reading the New Teſtament in Engliſh. The benefit of the clergy was not extended to the fair-ſex, 'till the days of William and Mary. And I mention as a proof of the general degradation of females among our Britiſh anceſtors, and the rational benevolence now operating on the minds of all, that the Scotch women have been admitted, but very lately, as witneſſes in a court of juſtice.

The

The Clergy under Elizabeth, who had not abandoned the ſchool of Thomas Aquinas, were, perhaps, as ſincerely attached to a few of his moral opinions, which flattered their frailties, as to his theological tenets, which darkened their underſtandings. And the angelical Doctor ſeems to have, particularly, favoured the concubinage of the Prieſts. "*Id facit in mundo meretrix*, (ſaith he) *quod in navi* "*ſentina*." An old writer complains, that "in "ſeveral dioceſes, now-a-days, the rectors of pa- "riſhes bargain with their biſhops for licenſe to "keep concubines." Though in the ſixteenth century, theſe indecent practices were no longer openly avowed or licenſed, yet I might refer to ſuch inſtances of immorality among the prieſthood, as no one will dare attribute to our preſent clergy.

Under the care of ignorant or ungentle paſtors, it is impoſſible that the flock could have ſecurely fed, beſide the waters of life.

In thoſe times, the pure ſpirit of chriſtianity was, comparatively, but little felt or underſtood.

Beneath the frown of Mary, our mild and meek religion had been miſerably oppreſt. The people, juſt reſpiring from perſecution, were now beginning to feel the benignity of the goſpel. But ſuperſtition had ſtill too viſible an influence.

Not

Not to advert, particularly, to the other period, (which I had only pitched upon as the golden age of literature) it may be enough to intimate, that, ſo far from being degenerated from our forefathers, we ſhall never, perhaps, witneſs ſuch bigotry and conſpiracies, ſuch maſſacres and wars, ſuch perfidy and licentiouſneſs, ſuch thoughtleſs ſenſuality, ſuch religious and political virulence, as have paſſed, in horrid review, from James to Anne.

It hath been ſaid, that the ſullen features of the nation are, at preſent, relaxed by luxurious enjoyment; and that, though we no longer diſgrace humanity by the outrages of tyrants and plunderers, we are all ſunk down together on the couch of diſſolute indulgence! It is affirmed, that the ties of order and decorum hang looſe on every ſtation—that we are actuated, from the higheſt to the loweſt, by an inordinate love of pleaſure—that we cannot overlook the extravagance and unfeeling indolence of the rich, who wanton in laſciviouſneſs, ſtifle conſcience, and deſpiſe reflexion; or the baſe idleneſs of the poor, who alarmingly increaſing around us, refuſe to work, though to beg they are not aſhamed.

Such

Such is the commonplace declamation that aſſails us, every day, as it iſſues from the pulpit or the preſs. But there is a want of truth in the picture: The colouring is, at leaſt, too ſtrong. As long as there are men, as Tacitus obſerves, there will be vices.

And the vice of the preſent age is a diſſipated voluptuouſneſs.

Still, however, we are gaining grounds in virtue; ſince, on all hands, it is confeſſed, that we have diſcarded the vindictive cruelty, and the ſurly avaritiouſneſs of our forefathers. In many points we are licentious: But we have an ingenuouſneſs and liberty of thinking and acting unparalleled by the days that are paſt. The higher ranks are more generous and condeſcending than even their hoſpitable fathers. The clergy are indiſputably better educated; and, conſequently, better able to inſtruct the people. The vulgar are ſufficiently informed: They have the ſacred books in their hands. From their youth, they have read the ſcriptures. They too have their vices: But they are more orderly than in times paſt. They ſpeak not evil of dignities. They are loyal, induſtrious and temperate.

Chriſtianity,

Chriſtianity, in ſhort, is nearly reduced to its priſtine purity. Its diſguiſe is detected; And its ſimple form is again acknowledged and revered. The effects of ſo happy a change muſt be perceivable in the general opinions and practice. We enjoy a tranquility, unexperienced ſince the primitive chriſtians. And, though "there are here-"ſies among us, that they which are approved "may be made manifeſt;" yet, in general, we diſplay a ſpirit of forbearance, of brotherly kindneſs and charity, which ſurrounding nations admire and emulate.

Surely, then, we are no degenerated race, either in literature or morality. Even though a part of this repreſentation be rejected as a painting from fancy; yet I have brought together a ſufficient number of facts, to prove our advantage over our forefathers.

To what end was the learning of a few, whilſt it was confined to a few? Moroſeneſs and pedantry. To what end was the goſpel, whilſt its moralities were veiled by pomp or myſticiſm? Superſtition or hypocriſy.

They are now univerſally diſſeminated for the happineſs of all.

And we have, now, in our power, more genuine felicity than was ever known at any former period; if we employ our better reaſon, in ſhunning the vices and delicacies peculiar to a refined people, and in cultivating that taſte, and elegance, and virtue, which were never brought forward, among our anceſtors, into a light ſo ſtrong or ſo beautiful.

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In the mean time, Mr. POLWHELE begs leave to intimate, that answers to his queries directed to *Sir George Yonge*, Stratford-Place, London, will be yet acceptable: But he is more peculiarly obliged to those Gentlemen who have early assisted him amidst his arduous researches: And indeed, he fears, that in his preface to the history, he shall be at a loss for terms sufficiently marked to express his sense of their ingenuity, candor, and liberality.

Kenton, April, 1791.